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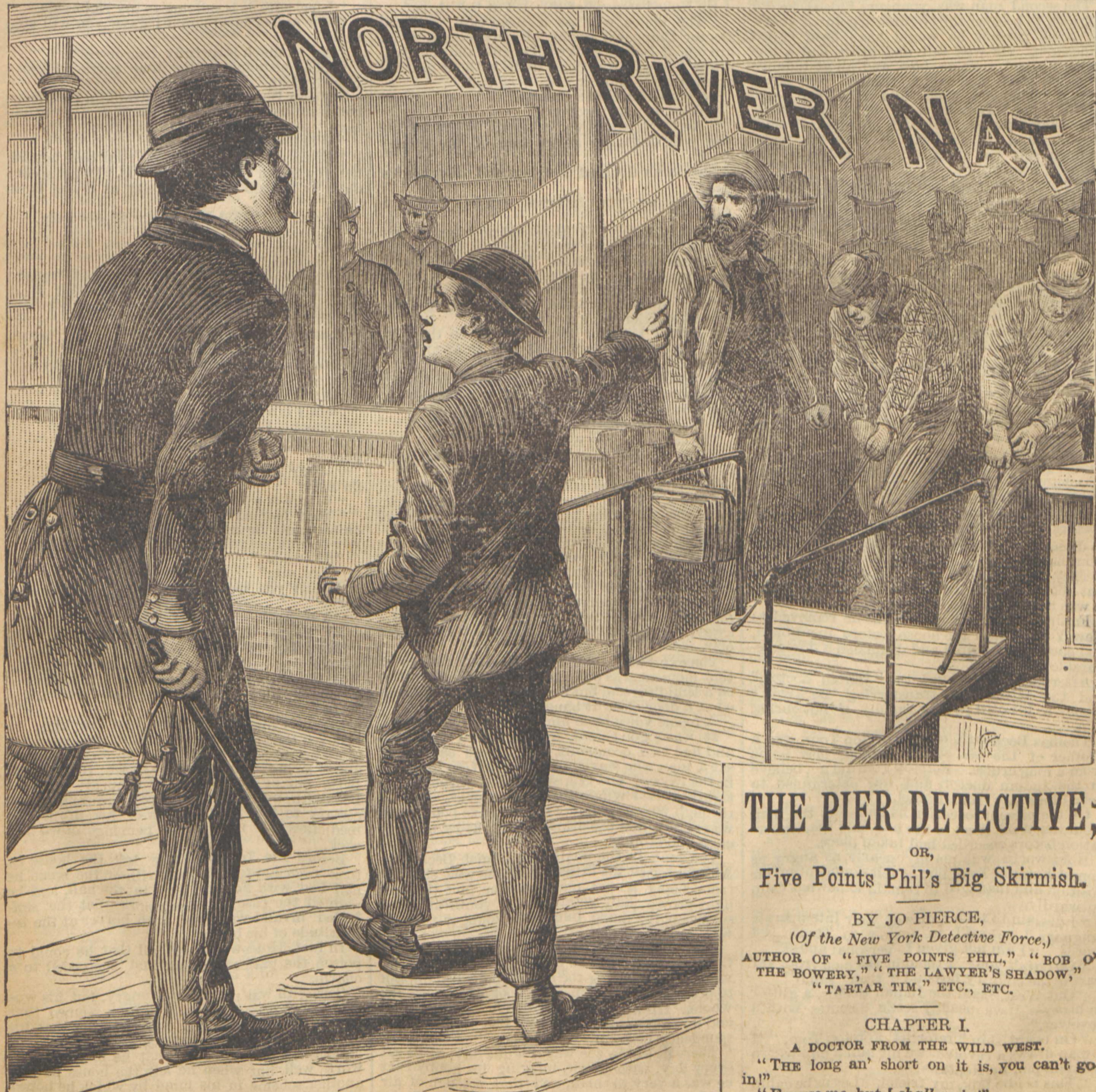
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THE PIER DETECTIVE;

OR,
Five Points Phil's Big Skirmish.

BY JO PIERCE,
(Of the New York Detective Force,)
AUTHOR OF "FIVE POINTS PHIL," "BOB O'
THE BOWERY," "THE LAWYER'S SHADOW,"
"TARTAR TIM," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A DOCTOR FROM THE WILD WEST.

"The long an' short on it is, you can't go in!"

"Excuse me, but I shall go in!"

"You will? By Neptune, you won't! What, do you s'pose I'll let you go ter that feeble-

"STOP THE BOAT!" SHOUTED NORTH RIVER NAT. "THAT INJUN DOCTOR IS WANTED," AND HE POINTED ONE FINGER AT CHIPPEWA.

minded old man, an' fill him up with yer pills an' drugs? A fine doctor, you be! You don't know the A B C of medicine, an' ef you think you can p'ison that old man you are 'way out o' yer latitude. I'm Foretop Tom, an' I'm tough. Don't ye molest me!"

"Be very careful how you molest me. Are you the man who employs me?"

"I? Sharks an' anchors! I hope not! When I do sech a fool-trick I want ter be carried to Bloomingdale Asylum. A crazy man who would be doctored by you ought to be thrashed, by Neptune!"

The parties to this animated discussion were standing in the hall of a house which was situated on a street of upper New York—one of the many houses which, during the last few years, have been springing up like mushrooms, so to speak, between Central Park and the North River.

The first speaker was a man of about fifty years, a muscular, rough, but honest-looking man, whose bronzed face and, in fact, whole appearance, confirmed the impression conveyed by his speech, that he was one more accustomed to sea than to land.

His name was Thomas Beckwith, though he answered far more quickly when addressed as "Foretop Tom."

The second man was younger; indeed, he did not look to be over thirty-three in point of years. By some persons he would have been called handsome. He was tall and erect, had a fine form, a broad, regular face, and an abundance of wavy, black hair which reached well down upon his shoulders. Collar and vest he had none, but a loose velveteen coat, which was little more than a jacket, showed a blue-flannel shirt beneath; and on his head he wore the wide-rimmed soft hat usually associated with the Western country.

In fact, if this man had just stepped off of the prairies he would have seemed more at home than in New York City, and he claimed to have lately come from some part of the West.

"Doctor Chippewa Holdsworth" was the name printed upon the cards he was wont to leave around with liberal profusion, and he claimed to have a mission to cure all the ills that beset the people of New York by the use of roots and herbs known only to the Indians.

He had recently appeared in Gotham, accompanied by three Pawnee Indians, and had pitched his tent on a vacant lot near the North River.

Then he announced himself ready to cure any and all complaints, and the "Indian Doctor," as he called himself, became for a time a metropolitan feature.

Among the patients he secured was a man named Daniel Beckwith. The latter had been a merchant of Herkimer county, but had abandoned business for the *role* of an invalid. He believed himself sorely afflicted, but all the local doctors whom he consulted, after trying in vain to discover what ailed him, came to the conclusion that he merely imagined his troubles.

They said as much to his daughter, Eudora, but not to Mr. Beckwith; in his existing mood it was not believed well to do so.

Failing to get relief at home he removed to New York, leased the house before mentioned, and successively hired and dismissed a dozen reputable physicians.

After that, he engaged the "Indian doctor," and the latter was transferring Beckwith's money to his own pocket rapidly, if not curing him.

Thomas Beckwith, alias Foretop Tom, was a brother of the self-styled invalid, just home from a long cruise. Foretop Tom did not believe in the Indian doctor, and was determined to keep him away from Daniel.

On the present occasion he had met the man from the Wild West in the hall, and the conversation before recorded had taken place.

Holdsworth was plainly nearly as angry as honest Foretop Tom, but he felt confident of his position and managed to remain somewhat calm outwardly.

"I disdain to take notice of your intemperate language," he said, in answer to Tom's last words. "I am not given to personal abuse."

"Oh! ain't you? I thought the men from yer part o' the country boasted o' their 'sand'?"

"Out West," said the Indian doctor, a glitter in his eyes, "we usually settle disputes with a revolver."

"On board ship," retorted Foretop Tom, "ef a man draws a revolver we hit him a clip with a belayin'-pin, by Neptune!"

"This is idle talk, my friend. Let us be calm. I am your brother's doctor—don't let us have trouble."

"Sharks an' anchors! how tame you be! Want ter wheedle me, don't ye? Want ter go in an' pour your miserable doses o' the Lord knows what down my weak-minded brother's throat, don't ye? Want ter gobble all his money fer yer quack medicines, don't ye? No doubt you'd like ter be *friends* with me, but I want yer ter know I'm all right up aloft!"

The honest sailor touched his forehead as he spoke. He was so filled with indignation that he could hardly keep his hands off of the Westerner; he longed to throw him out of the house, roots, herbs and all. There might be doctors of Holdsworth's "school" who could effect cures—he did not know positively how that was—but he felt sure that Doctor Chippewa was a humbug.

His last speech made the doctor's eyes glitter more than ever.

"See here, my man!" he exclaimed, "I am your brother's regular doctor, summoned by him and now in his employ. Unless you cease to obstruct me I will go at once to the authorities and notify them that there is a suffering man here in need of medical attendance, and that you refuse to let me go to him. That's a State's Prison affair, my man!"

Honest Tom was wholly ignorant of law, and very much afraid of it, as many another worthy person has been.

He looked somewhat startled at this threat.

"The police will see a clear case," pursued Doctor Chippewa, seeing his advantage; "you are one of Daniel Beckwith's heirs, and they will argue that you want him to die without medical attendance. Bad for you—very bad!"

Foretop Tom's face flushed.

"Why, he's my *brother*!"

"And rich, while you're poor. When he dies you will doubtless get a slice of his money if—"

The sailor doubled his fists and advanced a step.

"Hold up, you infarnal shark! Don't ye say—"

"Softly, softly! I have said nothing. I was only telling you how the police will look at it."

Foretop Tom fell back. He was in sore doubt and perplexity. He believed the Indian doctor to be a knave and a humbug, but the idea of getting himself into the grasp of the law was truly a startler to him.

"Hadn't I better compromise?" he thought. "I'll let the quack see Dan'l this time, an' then try to head the critter off."

A quiet, sarcastic smile appeared on Doctor Chippewa's face as he noticed this hesitation, but it vanished quickly as Tom looked up.

"Well?" he questioned.

The sailor stepped aside.

"I've nothin' more ter say," he reluctantly replied.

The Westerner strode past him and ascended the stairs. When near the top he looked back. Tom was watching him with a troubled, anything but friendly expression.

"There's mischief in that old fool!" thought Chippewa, "and he will not rest easy. A stitch in time saves nine, and it is clear that I have got to remove him, or he will cut off the principal source of my income. Eudora Beckwith is almost as much down on me, but if I can get him away, I can wheedle her. He must be got rid of!"

The expression on the Indian doctor's face at that moment was one which might have disturbed a timid person, but he banished it, and knocked at a door close at hand.

A feeble voice bade him enter, and he obeyed.

It was a good-sized, well-furnished bedroom, and had two occupants. In a large easy-chair sat a man who was sunning himself, so to speak, in the rays of Old S.I., which fell through the tightly-closed window. In fact, every avenue through which pure air might have penetrated was closed, and the atmosphere was revoltingly close and stifling.

The man in the chair was Daniel Beckwith. Although past his fiftieth year, he was still far from being an old man, and the fact that his light-brown hair retained its youthful color surprisingly, made him seem younger than he was.

His face, which was smoothly-shaven, was thin, certainly, but he hardly looked like an invalid. Considering the air he compelled himself to breathe, he was a healthy-looking man on the whole. His expression, however, was most glum and down-hearted; he looked like grief and despondency personified.

There he sat in the warm June day, as he sat every day, without air, hugging his hobby that he was a very ill man, and that a touch of air would surely carry him off and out of the world.

His servant stood behind his chair. The servant rejoiced in the name of B. Franklin Betts and he was an African gentleman of the most pronounced brunette type. His skin was as black as coal, but this did not trouble him. To use his own expression, "Et a pusson is goin' ter be a cul'ud gent, he's an idjit ef he don't go de 'ull hog!"

Whoever visited that chamber was sure to see two things. Daniel Beckwith would be in the big chair, and B. Franklin Betts would certainly be found standing behind the chair. Here any similarity ended. The master was tall, down-hearted, glum and peevish; the man was short, fat, contented with life and jolly at all times, though obliged to stoutly curb the latter propensity in his master's presence.

Doctor Chippewa advanced and lowered his deep base voice to a gentle growl.

"Well, my dear sir, how are we to-day?"

"Miserably, miserably!" sighed Beckwith, and the sigh seemed to come clear from his toes.

"Profuse perspiration, I see."

"Terrible!" dolorously agreed the patient.

"Your pulse, though, is much more regular."

"It is getting fearfully weak."

"Only about normal, I think."

"And my poor heart!"

"Does that trouble you still?"

"I feel sure it is shifting to my right side."

"The amber-hued liquid I gave you will stop that."

"My stomach is awfully disordered."

"The medicine in the blue bottle will soon remedy that."

"Massa Doctor," quoth B. Franklin Betts, who had been listening with the most serious attention, "is blue bottles good fur corns?"

"What's that?"

"Ef they be, I'd like one ob your blue bottles, but you needn't put no stuff in it. I's got a corn dat's as full ob animonstrosity as a dog is ob fleas."

"Franklin!" said Mr. Beckwith, severely.

"Yes, sah."

"Be silent."

"Yes, sah."

"I think, doctor," Beckwith pursued, "that I have discovered a fatal symptom—that I am near my end. My feet are beginning to swell."

"Ha! is that so?" cried the Indian doctor.

"That's the best news you could tell me, 'tis the wonderful effects of my prairie *Harasculo Moto-bocatto*, the most potent herb in my collection. My dear sir, your cure is now certain!"

"Ah! doctor, you are very good, and there certainly is a slight improvement—a SLIGHT improvement, I say—in my condition since you took charge, but I feel that I am a doomed man."

"Whar is it dis time, sah?" asked B. Franklin Betts.

"Where is what?"

"That doomed man feelin'. Shall I exply de amber-hued liquidation in an external form, wiv manual merniperation ob my hand, sah?"

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah."

"Don't you speak again while the doctor is here!"

"Yes, sah."

Mr. Betts's way of saying, "Yes, sah!" was irresistible. It rolled from his lips like oil from a jug, and, no matter what the occasion was, his face was always as impassive as that of a sphinx, and his manner grave and undisturbed.

Doctor Chippewa did not like Franklin; he believed that the colored servant possessed far more brains than he had any business to have; and if he dared, he would have sent B. Franklin Betts out of the house in a hurry. Daniel Beckwith, however, considered Franklin as necessary to the prolongation of his life as the medicines he was daily pouring down his neck.

Before the Indian doctor left the house he took occasion to tell Beckwith of the scene he had had with Foretop Tom in the hall, and he painted the case in such colors that the self-styled invalid was filled with horror at the ingratitude of his brother.

In fact, Holdsworth did all that he could to poison the patient's mind, and succeeded to a charm.

Beckwith was not exactly angry, but his woe grew more pronounced. To him it seemed that he was not only sick and suffering, but that his nearest relatives were turning against him.

Doctor Chippewa saw that he had done his work well, but when he left the house he had another scheme in his mind by which he hoped to get Foretop Tom effectually out of his way, at once and forever.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY OF THE PIER.

IT was a few hours later, and night had fallen over New York.

Upon a pier which projected into the North River sat a boy, his feet dangling over the water. He had come to the place to see the watchman, with whom he was acquainted, and when the latter's duties took him inside the building erected upon the pier, the boy went and sat down at the extreme point.

The panorama of the river interested him, and he watched the lights and dim forms of the various moving crafts with close attention.

Of these, some were proceeding up or down the broad stream on various errands, but in striking contrast to such wanderers were the ferry-boats which plowed their way regularly through the water to Jersey City, Hoboken or Weehawken, and back again.

Such a scene never loses its novelty, and the boy watched with interest.

Suddenly he heard a sound from the other end of the pier which caused him to turn his head. At first he thought it was his friend, the watchman, moving some article, but there was nothing outside the building, and none of the crafts which lay beside the pier was discharging or receiving cargo.

"Drunken sailors goin' aboard, I reckon," muttered the boy, and he turned his gaze again to the river.

Perhaps two minutes had elapsed when he heard the sound of oars. Looking around, he saw a boat shoot out from behind a schooner. Two men were in the smaller craft, one of whom was using the oars.

He pulled a strong, quick stroke, but the skill used made his efforts comparatively noiseless. The darkness prevented the watcher from seeing anything more; the boat and the men were not distinct enough so that he could recognize any distinguishing features about either.

The man at the oars pulled clear of the pier; then turned the bow of the boat up-stream, rowed on and speedily vanished from sight.

The boy looked after them doubtfully.

"He's in a pestiferous hurry!" he muttered.

The oarsman's stroke had been quicker than the average, but not sufficiently so to confirm the idea that first entered the boy's mind.

For a moment he had wondered if they were river-thieves, but he abandoned the idea after a little meditation.

"Wilson must 'a' seen 'em, arnd knowed their boat was nigh. I reckon it's all right; I'm gittin' ter be too suspicious o' late, owin' ter the unoosual exper'ence I've had with pestiferous critters who were up ter mean tricks."

Perhaps ten minutes passed, and then the sound of voices at the landward end of the pier caused him to rise.

"Wilson's got company, arnd I'm goin' ter see who 'tis. The hooman mind is always o' an investigatin' mold, arnd ef I ain't got my share on't my name ain't Five Points Phil. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

With this quaint remark the boy sauntered past the structure presided over by Wilson. When he reached the front, he found that gentleman in conversation with a policeman. As Phil turned the corner, he attracted their attention, and Wilson suddenly cried:

"Here is somebody who may be able to help you. My boy, have you seen any one on the pier?"

"Can't say I hev," Phil promptly replied.

"It must be, officer, that your man did not come this way. True, I was very busy inside, and making some racket, but the boy would have seen them if they went out his way."

"Dot vas all right," answered the policeman, with a strong accent, "but I sees dose men mit mine own eyes, myself. Mr. Beckwith vas der first to go, an' den der udder men dey followed. I seen dem as blain as never vas. Dey did not come pack, so vere did they go?"

Having asked this question, the officer removed his hat and scratched his head in perplexity.

"Missin' men, eh?" said Phil, remembering the incident of the boat.

"Yes; Officer Snyderham saw a gentleman he knew come this way, and now that he wants to speak with him, he can't find him."

"Dot man vas Mr. Thomas Beckwith, sometimes called 'Foredop Tom.' I know him mit personal acquaintance," explained the patrolman, somewhat importantly. "My pees'nness mit him vas not imbornt, but dose two men who comes right after him looked rough enough to be hard characters, you see."

"Mebbe you'll eloocidate furder," suggested Five Points Phil.

Officer Snyderham did so. While on his beat

he had seen a gentleman pass, and go out on the pier, whom he recognized as Mr. Thomas Beckwith, an old sailor. Soon after two rough-looking men went the same way.

In a few minutes it occurred to him that he would like to speak with Beckwith, and he had gone in search of him. All three of the men had disappeared.

"Mr. Beckwith must be on von of dose vessels," Snyderham added, "though why he should go dere I can't exblain in der least."

"Probably he is there," agreed Wilson.

"See hyar," interrupted Phil, "who was them chaps that had the boat?"

"What boat?"

"The one over thar."

"The only boats there were those belonging to the vessels that lie there."

The boy shook his head slowly.

"I ain't so sure o' that, my b'loved comtemporary. I see'd a boat leave thar a while ago, and it wouldn't s'prise me ef 'twas the very chaps the orficer wants."

"My poy," said Snyderham, "vot vas your name?"

"They calls me North River Nat," answered Phil, giving Wilson a hint not to reveal his real name.

"Dot vas a queer name, py Chove. Well, I vas myself going to look around here and see if I could find Mr. Thomas Beckwith you see."

The search was duly made, but Mr. Beckwith was not to be found upon the pier, or aboard any of the vessels. Neither had he been seen by the sailors, but this was not strange, as nearly all were below.

One circumstance was developed which was of more than passing interest. It was learned that the boat Phil had seen did not belong to any of the vessels, nor had it been manned by members of any crew.

Wilson, who had been out on the open part of the pier nearly all the evening, had not seen this boat, and it looked very much as though it had been rowed secretly to the vicinity, concealed by the craft lying there, and as secretly taken away.

Officer Snyderham was somewhat worried.

He had read the life of Vidocq when he first went on the force, and had ever since been desirous of distinguishing himself. As a result, he was always on the watch for points.

Ordinarily he would have set the men who had been seen in the boat down as thieves, but the fact that he had seen "Foretop Tom" go upon the pier, and that the old sailor had then disappeared so strangely, led him to draw another inference.

Had anything happened to Beckwith?

The missing man had led an adventurous life ever since his boyhood, but that did not necessarily mean that he was able to look out for himself; it remained a fact that old sailors are prone to get into trouble frequently.

The patrolman explained all this, and incidentally mentioned the fact that he was well acquainted with Foretop Tom, having met him when visiting a Miss Katie McKeevin, who lived in the same house.

As there was no proof that harm had been done the sailor, Snyderham finally returned to his beat, after asking Five Points Phil where he could be found in case he wished to see him again.

"Wilson," said the boy, when they were left alone, "what d'y'e think o' this, anyhow?"

"Bah! that Dutchman is scared about nothing; he's always finding mares' nests," Wilson answered.

"But whar is Foretop Tom?"

"A mile away, probably. I doubt if it was he, and if it was, he probably went away by the street."

"The plice guardien was posityve in his asseverations, though."

"He always is."

"But I'm rayther inclined ter think he may be right."

"It's possible."

"Ef the sailor chap has fell afoul o' thieves arnd pestiferous assassins, I'd sorter like ter know it."

"What! do you want to do some more amateur detective work?"

"That's erbout the size on't, my b'loved comtemporary. I feel the detective fever gittin' hold on me in a voylent form, by ginger!"

"You'd better curb it."

"Why, ain't I always did good work? Ain't I helped sev'ral o' my 'quaintances out o' pestiferous scrapes, downin' the villains arnd helpin' the cause o' jestic along?"

"That's all true, but Solomon Richmore is helping you to be a man of importance, as a re-

ward for what you did for him. You are getting an education—you have enough now so that you need not use such language as you do. Fact is, you are too much of a high-spot in the world now to be acting the detective."

"Fact is, my b'loved comtemporary," retorted Phil, "I hope I won't never git so high up the ladder that I can't spare time ter help an honist individooal who is in a pestiferous fix. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

"Have it your own way."

"Jes' so! Thank ye! Much obleeged!" coolly replied the boy. "Mebbe you noticed thart I tol' the city guardien that my name was North River Nat. Thart is ter be my name arnd title fur awhile. Five Points Phil is too wal knowed in Gotham ter enable him ter be a shadder, arnd that is jest what I want ter be ef thart sailor chap is in diffikilty. Yes, sirree; ef harm has come ter him I'm goin' ter act detective ag'in, arnd while I do so my name is North River Nat!"

CHAPTER III.

MISSING FORETOP TOM.

It was just after noon, the following day.

Five Points Phil sat in the room of a house on Macdougal street, diligently perusing a book. In many ways he was as peculiar of appearance as was his speech. He was sixteen years of age, but as he was small for his age, he did not look over fourteen or fifteen.

His face was small, sharp and shrewd—in-deed, he somehow resembled an alert rat in this respect—but it was a frank, honest, intelligent face, and though more firm than regular, not without some claim to good looks.

His eyes had a shrewd, wise expression, but often changed to that of humor. Indeed, he saw the comic side of everything, and managed to enjoy life as he went along.

Once he had been exceedingly poor, and a marvel in rags; but having done a great favor to a man named Richmore, this gentleman had put him in better garments and made ample provisions for an education for the boy.

For the time being, Five Points Phil had no need to worry about money or anything else, but as it was now the summer season, he had a vacation from school and was improving the chance to look about his native city, great New York, thoroughly.

As he sat reading on this occasion, a rap sounded at the door.

"Come!" directed Phil.

The door opened, and Policeman Snyderham entered.

"How you vas, North River Nat?" saluted the genial officer, who, apparently, was still ignorant of the youth's true name.

"Hello, my b'loved comtemporary! Is it you?"

"It vas, py Chove! You vas perusin' a book mit yourself, I dake it."

"Jes' so, Mr. Patrolman."

"I haf comes to see you on pees'nness."

"Erbout that sailor chap?" Phil quickly asked.

"Yah; it vas apout Foredop Tom."

"Wal?"

"I vas sure he haf met mit foul blay; he haf not peen home sence last night."

"Great ginger! I reckon them two rough-lokin' individooals you seen on the pier did do him mischief!"

"Dot vas my obinion, py Chove!"

The fat German, who was now in citizen's clothes, began to fan himself excitedly with his hat.

"So you've looked the diffikilty up?"

"I called to ask Miss McKeevin apout Foredop Tom, und see der whole family. They vas worried apout him."

Five Points Phil laid down his book, arose, thrust both hands deeply into his pockets, and fixed his gaze steadily upon the officer.

"My b'loved comtemporary, it behooves us ter look inter this. Ef some pestiferous critter hez got away with an honist sailor, it's time fur Vidocq ter strike out with both fists. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things. Assoorely!"

"Dot vas it; I am going to bring der guilty barties to justice, and I vants you pecase you saw der men in der poat. I vill win fame out of this case, und get to be a detective. Dot vas der chance I haf waited for ever since I vas made one of der finest."

"Assoorely!"

Phil looked benignly at the fat officer, but if he had spoken his mind, he would not have prophesied success for Snyderham. Honest and good-natured the German surely was, but he

looked as innocent and unsophisticated as a child.

"Now, North River Nat, you will please go mit me. Der prother of der missing man, Mr. Daniel Beckwith, wants to see you mit himself."

"Jes' so—come on!"

Phil slapped his hat upon his head and was all ready. Such celerity rather dazed Snyderham, but he recovered and lifted his bulky form out of the chair. They left the house, walked to Sixth avenue and took a train of the Elevated road at Eighth street.

While they were traveling up-town Phil asked many questions, and received a very full history of the Beckwith family. Snyderham admitted that one Katie McKeevin, who was Eudora Beckwith's maid, was the source of his information, and Phil was not slow to perceive that the honest patrolman had a very high opinion of the said Katie.

One thing only interested the listener.

Daniel Beckwith, an invalid, was being doctored by a "wild man from der Vest," as Snyderham called the Indian doctor.

"That's queer!" exclaimed Phil.

"What was queer?"

"That a rich man should hev sech a doctor."

"Do you know," gravely replied the German, "I believe dot minself."

"I've heerd it said thar is a heap o' good in roots arnd yarbs, ef properly a'plied, but I ain't no faith in sech a critter ez you describe. Ev'ry leetle while sech a crowd shows up arnd tries ter cure all ills marn is heir to. Mebbe they do, but afore you take Injun medicines, you warnt ter be sure they was dug in the West, not in Jersey or Connecticut. Assoorely!"

"Doctor Chippewa looks to be from der West."

"I must see the gent."

Phil's wish was gratified much sooner than he expected. When they reached Daniel Beckwith's house they were admitted by Katie McKeevin—a bright-looking young Irish girl—but had gone no further than the hall when Doctor Holdsworth, himself, came down the stairs.

Five Points Phil gazed sharply at the doctor, and the latter hesitated and looked suspiciously at the visitors.

He had just come from Daniel Beckwith, and had been told that Foretop Tom was missing. He was tempted to go back and be present at the interview which, he saw, would soon take place, but speedily abandoned the idea.

He regarded Snyderham as too stupid to be dangerous, while as for Phil—why, he was only a boy! This disposed of him in the estimation of Doctor Chippewa.

Without a word or nod to any one, he passed them with a supercilious air and left the house.

Snyderham pointed after him with one fat finger.

"I don't like dot man!" he declared.

"Loike him!" exclaimed Katie. "I'd sooner loike a rattlesnake. I tell yez, Mistrer Snyderham that mon has got a heart loike a tiger an' I know it. We all know it. Miss Eudora, she's down on him, an' so is that brunette gent, Franklin Betts; an' it was only yesterday that honest Mr. Tom, may de Lord bless him, nigh threwe de spalpeen out ave de house."

"What's that?" demanded Phil.

Katie looked sharply at the questioner.

"My tear Miss McKeevin, explained the policeman, "dot poy was my witness, und you may answer dose questions vot he ask."

"Assuredly!" put in Phil. "Answer 'em, by all means. Did the Injun doctor arnd Foretop Tom hev a row yesterday?"

"They did, that."

"Come ter blows!"

"No, but they talked quite warrum!"

"What erbout?"

"Mr. Tom didn't want de quack doctor ter come here wid his p'ison medicines, an' he tol' him so plain, an' they had a great row, I can tell yez."

"Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things. Tell me the 'hull story ef ye please. My mind is of a joodical arnd inquirin' turn, arnd I'd like ter hear the fax."

Katie had been a listener to the trouble in the hall, and she gave a vivid account of it. Her recollection of the exact words uttered was but dim, but she stated that each had threatened the other, and that Doctor Chippewa had only gained entrance to his patient after a stormy interview.

Furthermore, Thomas Beckwith had afterward declared, when talking with Miss Eudora, that he would help Chippewa out if he had to barricade the door.

Five Points Phil saw a good deal in this. He

had seen Holdsworth; he had noticed what a cold, cruel face the Indian doctor had; and if he had felt any faith in the Westerner it would have vanished at sight.

But there was more. The doctor and Foretop Tom had had a bitter quarrel; threats had been freely used, and the old sailor had tried to help Chippewa away from Daniel Beckwith.

The great question now in Phil's mind was, had Chippewa, to prevent being defeated by Tom, removed the latter from his path by violence?

Phil did not mention his suspicions, for neither Katie nor Snyderham seemed to entertain any clear idea in the same direction, but asked numerous questions and acquired all the information he could.

Finally he and the patrolman went up to Mr. Daniel Beckwith's room.

The invalid sat in his big chair, as usual; the temperature of the room was as high and the air as stifling as usual; and, as usual, B. Franklin Betts stood demurely behind his master's chair.

Officer Snyderham was evidently in great awe of the rich man, and he walked forward with a ponderous attempt to step lightly.

"Dot was der poy, Mr. Beckwith," he announced.

"Ah!" said the invalid, with a heavy sigh. "Come here, boy, where I can see you."

"Assoorely," Phil coolly replied. "Hope I see you wal, my b'loved contemporary."

"Well?" cried Beckwith; "I haven't been well for years."

"Now I obsarve ye more closer, ye do look sorter played out, by ginger!"

"I am fast nearing the final home of man," lugubriously added Beckwith.

"Goin' ter move, be ye?"

"Te-he!"

Solomon B. Franklin Betts had done a very improper thing. His solemnity only being skin-deep, he had laughed in a peculiar, half-smothered way. His master at once grew mournfully displeased.

"Franklin!

"Yes, sah."

"Did you laugh?"

"No, sah. I most sneezed, but I choked it off 'cause I afeerd it would make yer left knee swell more."

Mr. Betts made this explanation as seriously as though he had never laughed in his life.

"I am glad to hear it, Franklin."

"Yes, sah."

"Now, boy," continued Beckwith, "I shall be glad to hear what you know about my missing brother."

"Assoorely. It ain't much, but you're welcome to it, sech as 'tis."

With this preface Five Points Phil went on and told the whole story of his experience on the pier. It was soon told. Despite his resolution to investigate Foretop Tom's disappearance he was not in the least inclined to confide in Daniel Beckwith, or advance any theories, so the latter obtained only dry facts.

"Several questions occur to me," said the invalid, with a heavy sigh. "You say there were but two men in the boat?"

"Thart's all thart I seen."

"What do you mean?"

"Thar might 'a' been another layin' down in the boat."

"This had occurred to me. You are sure there was no cry for help, nor of pain?"

"Didn't hear no sech man'festation."

"Yet my poor brother might have been murdered and sunk in the water just beyond the pier."

"Assoorely."

"What is your theory?"

"Can't say I hev a positve one; it might 'a' been either way."

"Dat was for me to learn, Mr. Beckwith," said Snyderham. "You vill remember I was one of der finest—a boleesmans of dat New York. I shall der trail pick up mit my sagacity, und clear der whole mystery blain."

"Do this, and you shall be well rewarded," earnestly replied Beckwith. "I feel sure my poor brother has met with foul play—solve the mystery, and I will pay a good round sum!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE INDIAN DOCTOR HAS SOMETHING TO SAY.

THIS offer made Officer Snyderham's eyes twinkle perceptibly.

"Dot was good!" he affirmed, "und I was going to earn dot money, marry Katie, und start a corner grocery, py Chove. Cood cracious! I spoke out before I think—Katie would

sit down on my ears mit her hand if she heard me say dot!"

The honest patrolman grew very red in his embarrassment, and though Beckwith's melancholy was proof even against this, Phil and Franklin Betts were very much amused. Phil winked at the colored gentleman, and then the latter had to clasp both hands tightly over his mouth to avoid laughing vociferously.

"I stand ready to keep my promise, officer," replied Beckwith. "Go on and do your best."

He then turned his gaze upon Phil.

"What is your name, my lad?"

"North River Nat."

"That's a peculiar name."

"Assoorely, but ye see thar was sech a big famly on us thart they thought a change would be beneficial in my case. Thar was too many Smiths, arnd not enough o' other creeds, arnd denominations. Hence, my cognomen o' North River Nat."

"Are you busy?"

"Not ter my knowledge."

"I would like to have you about here until this matter is settled, for you may be able to identify the men you saw in the boat. Can I hire you for awhile?"

"Great ginger, yes! I'm out o' a job jest now, arnd I'd jump at the chance."

Phil meant all that he said; he had become interested in the case of Foretop Tom, and as he already had a theory in the case, it would aid him greatly to be given the freedom of the house.

"Consider yourself engaged, then. I don't imagine there will be anything in particular for you to do, unless it is to run an occasional errand, but I want you where you can be found. Will four dollars a week, and your board, be pay enough?"

Phil would as readily have come without any pay at all, and he accepted the offer without argument.

Snyderham was then directed to escort him to the lower part of the house, and present him to Miss Eudora Beckwith in his new capacity. Phil kept his own counsel, and as Beckwith judged him wholly by his humble garments, he did not dream the boy was so situated that employment was not an object.

Eudora proved to be a very pleasant young lady, indeed. Having lived nearly all her life in Herkimer county, she had grown up strong and healthy, and she so combined these qualities with real beauty, that Phil mentally pronounced her "as pooty as a pictur'!"

She showed no reluctance to admit him to the house as a member of the domestic department thereof; she was strongly attached to her missing uncle, and if the boy could help to find him, he was certainly very welcome.

So Snyderham went away alone, and Phil remained as directed. He gave his name as North River Nat, and as that was hardly satisfactory to Miss Eudora, added the surname of Smith. Then he fairly entered upon his new career, and for the present we will know him, as did the family, as North River Nat—otherwise as Nathanael Smith.

During the afternoon he made himself as familiar as was possible with the state of affairs, and the more he heard about Doctor Chippewa Holdsworth, the more he was inclined to suspect him.

He was getting a good deal of money out of Daniel Beckwith, but Foretop Tom had threatened to drive him out of the house.

If the Indian doctor was a rascal, and the boy believed that he was, it would be the most likely thing in the world that he would try to remove the obstacle to his success.

That evening Chippewa called again. He had been calling twice a day, and that was not strange, but something unusual occurred this time.

When Kate McKeevin opened the door Nat was listening near the top of the basement stairs, and he heard the Indian doctor ask to see Miss Beckwith on important business. Katie was surprised, but she felt so sure that her young mistress would refuse to see him that she went at once to the parlor, where Eudora was sitting, and delivered the message.

Greatly to her surprise, the young lady said she would see him at once, and Holdsworth entered the room with a look of triumph on his face.

As he walked in, North River Nat entered the back parlor. It was not the proper thing to do to act the listener, but the boy was determined to overhear what occurred. He had been given a roving commission, as it were, and he intended to shadow Holdsworth closely.

If he was discovered, he would tell Miss Beck-

with all, and trust to her common sense to pardon him.

By the time he had gained position near the hanging curtain between the two rooms Chippewa had made his opening speech, whatever that was.

"I suppose, Miss Beckwith, that you are surprised that I should ask for you," he added.

"Somewhat, I confess," Eudora coldly replied.

"I wish to speak of your uncle."

"My uncle!"

"Yes. Is he still missing?"

"He is, sir."

"What is your theory in the case?"

"I confess that I do not know what to think."

"Isn't it possible that he has gone to sea, again?"

"Decidedly not, sir. He promised to stay with us all summer."

"I may be wrong," continued Holdsworth, assuming a thoughtful frown, "but I have a theory. I am told that a West India ship sailed last night, on which, owing to the unpopularity of the captain, they found it very hard to get a crew. There are rumors that some sailors were impressed—in other words, kidnapped."

"And do you think Uncle Thomas was one of them?"

"Such a thing is possible."

"How could they get him?"

"Did he say where he was going when he went out?"

"He said he was going out for a walk along the piers," Eudora confessed.

"Ah! doesn't that confirm what I said?"

Chippewa had not been told what Snyderham and North River Nat saw on the pier, and Eudora had no intention of making it known.

"Why are you interested in my uncle?" she bluntly asked.

"I am your father's doctor."

"You owe Uncle Thomas no thanks for it; you and he were not frien's."

"My dear Miss Beckwith, I trust that I have a mind above the petty antagonisms of life," blandly answered Chippewa. "Mr. Thomas Beckwith was opposed to me, but I should be sorry to have him come to harm, if for no other reason than that such a thing will inevitably make your father worse."

Eudora was silent, and after a brief pause the Indian doctor added:

"If you, Miss Beckwith, would only give me credit for being an honest man, I would be greatly pleased. Your good-will would be inexplicably dear to me!"

The man from the West lowered and softened his voice, and watchful North River Nat opened his keen eyes wider than ever.

"Great ginger!" he thought, "the pestiferous critter is goin' ter make love ter her, sure as mussels!"

"I have not said that you lack my good-will," Eudora coldly replied.

"Ah! but you have been opposed to my attendance upon your father, I fear."

"That is true."

"Is he not improving under my treatment?"

"Sir, the best doctors of New York have said that his ailments are purely imaginary. This is not a pleasant thing for a daughter to say, but such is the fact."

"Really, I must disagree with these learned doctors. At the time I took charge of the case, your father was approaching a most critical point. Because those doctors failed to understand his trouble, they have no right to thus grossly wrong a suffering man."

"We will not discuss that."

"And you persist in having a poor opinion of me?"

"I am not your patient."

The evasive answer did not overpower Chippewa.

"I would be your friend, Miss Beckwith," he said, boldly, and his eye rested upon her in a way which made her start.

"Excuse me," she returned, hastily, "but have you business with me?"

"Have I not spoken of your uncle?"

"Yes. Have you said all? If so, I shall have to ask you to excuse me."

Holdsworth bit his lips with mortification and anger.

"I wish to aid you to find Mr. Beckwith, if I can."

"You can give your theory to my father."

Eudora rose as she spoke. What she had not before suspected came to her like a revelation; this man, whom she so disliked and feared, was actually placing himself as her admirer. The idea frightened her.

A smile appeared on Chippewa's face, but it

was not a pleasant smile. There was something of chagrin, anger, menace and confident power in it, and though he bowed low as she passed out of the room, watchful North River Nat, observing all from his covert, was somehow reminded of a snake about to make a meal.

The Indian doctor went up-stairs to Daniel Beckwith, while Nat sought Miss Beckwith, and asked leave to "go out and look around a bit."

This was readily granted, and he went at once.

His movements after he was once clear of the house were hardly those of one who is anxious to explore a locality. The vicinity lacked a good deal of being fully built up, and completed dwellings were mixed with those in process of erection, and with vacant lots.

North River Nat took position beside one of the unfinished houses, sat down and proceeded to wait patiently.

Half an hour elapsed. During this time several persons passed, and he gave each one careful attention, but did not seem to find anything of interest about them. Finally quick, firm steps were followed by the appearance of the Indian doctor, and the boy became at once all attention.

Chippewa went unsuspectingly on, and Nat fell in behind him and followed like an Indian on the trail.

CHAPTER V.

NORTH RIVER NAT'S ADVENTURES.

PLAINLY, Holdsworth did not have any suspicion that he was liable to be followed, for he did not once look around. If he had, it is not likely that the young pursuer would have been detected. He kept well back, and the darkness acted like a curtain to help him.

The Indian doctor went a few blocks, turning at right-angles a few times, and then Nat saw that they were approaching his destination. In a vacant lot just ahead the dull, white outline of a tent became visible; this was where Chippewa had settled down with his red-skins, to cure whatever bodily troubles might beset the people of New York.

He went promptly to the lot and inside the tent.

It now became Nat's great desire to see the inside of this place, and he did not know what obstacles or dangers might confront him. Possibly Holdsworth would have one of his Indians on guard.

Nat studied the state of affairs, and then slowly and cautiously approached the rear of the tent.

At first he had been afraid that he would have some trouble to get a good look without injuring the canvas, but chance favored him. Some other boy, with far less important an object, had cut a slit which had escaped notice, and when Nat pulled it wide open there was nothing more to baffle him.

There was, with the exception of the men, little inside to attract attention, but on an improvised table stood an array of bottles which contained medicine all ready to be passed over in exchange for that more substantial article—New York money.

Holdsworth and his Indians were there. The doctor had taken position on a camp-stool, while the red-men were squatted down almost like so many statues.

An active conversation had already begun, but not one word of it could North River Nat understand. He was willing to believe that it was in the Indian tongue—it was certainly guttural and complicated enough to fill his idea of the language of the noble red-man.

"So this ere is the gang that does the big doctor act!" thought Nat, scornfully. "Great ginger! I wouldn't trust 'em ter doctor a sick cat, let alone a booman individooal. They look like cut-throats arnd p'soners—they assoorely do! Don't see how that big tough kin so bamboozle Dan'l Beckwith, but a marin may smile arnd be a villain still."

His estimate of the quartette was certainly correct, as far as outward signs went. From a "pale-face's" point of view no Indian is handsome, but Chippewa's red-men really looked brutal and dangerous to an extreme.

Nat was interested in them, however. He had seen similar combinations in New York before, but never one which particularly attracted his attention.

Unless all signs failed he was destined to have considerable experience with these men, and he looked them over carefully.

While he was thus engaged the tent-entrance was suddenly darkened, and two white men appeared there.

Holdsworth promptly rose.

"Ha! is it you, my dear Greggs?" he exclaimed. "Glad to see you—come in! And here is Parsons, too. You're both welcome."

He shook their hands, and then motioned toward the squatting figures at one side.

"These are my noble red-men, Walking Bear, Sun-that-Shines and War-Wolf."

Chippewa then arranged camp-stools for his guests.

"Sit down, and be happy," he said. "Can I cure you of anything?"

Greggs, who was a flashily-dressed, shrewd-looking man, evidently a New Yorker, laughed dryly.

"I don't think you can, Doc."

"Plenty of medicine on the table."

"That's for rich folks, who have more money than—"

"Yes, yes; I know," hastily agreed Holdsworth. "I am glad you're not sick. Any news?"

"No."

"All lovely, then?"

"Yes."

"Where's your other man—Moody?"

"He's making himself useful—"

"That's all right," interrupted Chippewa. "So everything is quiet on the Potowac?"

"Just so."

"Glad ye think so," muttered North River Nat, who was listening greedily. "Ef you chaps ain't got a secret understandin', my name is Dennis. Keep it up, ye pestiferous critters; I'd jest like ter hev ye put me onter yer little game, by ginger!"

This they did not seem inclined to do. Either Chippewa did not trust his red-men, or he had heard the old saying that walls may have ears. Whatever Greggs might have said he promptly checked.

The impression was strong in Nat's mind that such a revelation would interest him, for he believed that the visitors were as big rascals as Chippewa. Parsons, in particular, was a coarse, brutal-looking fellow.

At last the two men arose to go. Chippewa stepped outside the door and exchanged a few words with Greggs, but Nat had no way of hearing what it was; he could not get near, and their voices were lowered.

Only a little was said: then the doctor returned to the tent, while Greggs and Parsons walked away.

"They're my game!" muttered Nat. "I don't know who they be in perlite society, but I warn't ter most tremenjus. They come ter say suthin' private ter the white Injun, arnd it bebooves me ez a joodical arnd honest citizen ter git onter their game. Look out, Gregg-y—I'm a-comin', by ginger!"

And he fell in behind them, resolved to track them to their lair, wherever that was.

After a few turns and a few minutes' walk they reached Eighty-first street, and then proceeded westward. Beyond the Elevated Road building operations were in full blast—though, of course, not being prosecuted at night—and half-finished structures arose on either side, while the middle of the street was filled with piles of bricks, lumber and sand.

Past all these went the men, still continuing on Eighty-first street.

Nat began to have a theory as to where they were going. He remembered that after passing Tenth avenue there was a vacant lot on either side, and then the character of the neighborhood abruptly changed. Modern buildings were almost unknown there, and more or less humble wooden houses were mixed with a segment of "Shanty-town," these structures only ending when Riverside Boulevard was reached.

He at once leaped to the conclusion that Greggs and Parsons would either go to one of these huts, or cross the Boulevard and the Hudson River Railroad, and take to a boat.

His first idea proved correct. The men went on to the collection of wooden buildings, and entered a shanty which looked as though a strong breath of wind would blow it down in hopeless ruin.

Nat paused, looked around, and was impressed by the humorous side of the case.

"This hyar is w'ot I call classic ground, by ginger!" he muttered. "The street ain't so elegant as it might be, nor the sidewalk as pooty, arnd the habit o' teamsters o' usin' the king's highway ez a stable fur their wagons ain't accordin' ter my idees o' hooman fitness, but these habitations are romantic arnd noomerons, arnd they hev the flavor o' antiquity erbout 'em. I'll bet a counterfit ten-cent piece Mr. C. Columbus erected these palatial structures. Think I'll buy one myself, arnd hev my post-office ar'dress changed ter Eighty-first street!"

Suddenly arousing, he looked sharply toward the low house Greggs and Parsons had entered.

"I warn't to see that place inside out," he added.

He surveyed it carefully, calculating his chances of escaping detection if he investigated. Thus far he had no proof that the men he had followed were other than honest citizens, and he did not want to get into trouble or worry worthy men—his mission was to defeat rascals.

After a little reconnoitering he glided forward, made a few turns among the small buildings, and approached the one he wished to investigate from the rear.

He found the door open, and everything dark.

"It's a burglarious thing ter do," he muttered, "but I'm in fur it, arnd it won't do fur me ter back out now."

Hesitating only a little longer, Nat crept cautiously up the stairs. When he reached the top he found himself in a short hall. It was without a lamp or gas, but a door just beyond being ajar, sent out enough light to break the gloom a little.

From the room beyond the door came the sound of voices, and as Nat felt sure that Greggs and Parsons were there, he crept forward. It would be dangerous to look inside, but once more chance favored him.

At the side of the hall was a small closet; the door of this being open showed that a small window had been fitted into it, to secure light from the room beyond. It was just the place. Nat quickly entered, pulled the door to behind him, stepped upon a trunk, and, looking through the window, had the desired view of the men.

They were three in number, two being Greggs and Parsons. The third was a fellow who looked as villainous as Parsons.

Nat found that he could easily hear what was said, and he proceeded to listen. His mind, however, was not at ease; he did not like the part he was playing. There might be no real reason why he should thus shadow the men, and his entrance to the house had been decidedly unceremonious.

Whether they held secrets which he wished to know or not, they were desperate-looking men, and discovery might prove fatal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOY IN THE CLOSET.

NORTH RIVER NAT pressed his face close to the window and listened eagerly.

"Times are mighty hard," said the unknown man. "Why, I ain't had a square meal fur a week, and the Lord only knows when I will. New York is gettin' too goody-goody fur me."

"Times ain't what they was," Parsons agreed.

"I was down on the bluff t'other day," pursued the disconsolate man, "an' when I seen the Hudson River train comin' I was a good minder go down an' let 'em run over me, but I hated ter be done up by a freight train. I've some pride left, ef I be poor."

"That's the way ter talk."

"Nobody hez asked me ter do a job fur an age, an' I'm sorter losin' my nerve, anyhow. Tom, Abe an' Dan are all in Sing Sing, an' I don't want ter go."

"Brace up, man!" interrupted Greggs. "You can never do anything without nerve. Faint heart don't get boodle."

"Be you takin' risks now?"

"Certainly."

"What racket be you on?"

"Never mind that."

"Nothin' more than the confidence game, I'll bet."

"We dropped a man t'other night!"

Parsons made the assertion with the quick indignation of one who feels his business nerve and sagacity assailed, but Greggs turned angrily upon him.

"Don't give your brains away!" he ordered.

"I see ye don't trust me," grumbled the stranger.

"Nonsense, Alf. You and I have been in too many jobs for you to think that, but you know it was always your own motto that, 'What is one outsider's business, is everybody's business.' We're in delicate business, you see."

"Boodle in it?"

"Good promises."

"But not sure pay, eh?"

"It may prove so."

"When I silence a man, I make sure the pay is good."

"That's all right," acknowledged Greggs, "but this is a peculiar case—a very peculiar case."

"I'll bet, Alf, that you can't guess who our boss is," interrupted Parsons.

"You shut up, will you?" angrily cried Greggs.

"Oh! all right," replied Alf; "I don't know that I blame you. If you've knocked a man over you want ter be mighty keerful. Say, Greggs, ef you see a chance for me, give me a tip, will ye?"

"Yes."

Greggs was thoughtful for a moment, and then he slowly added:

"This case may yet give you a chance. Our employer is playing a bold game, and there is no knowing what he may have to do before he gets through. If another man is needed, I'll give you the chance, Alf, sure."

The melancholy man's face brightened.

"You're a brick, Randall Greggs!" he declared, "an' I'll show ye that I appreciate a good turn. I've got a bottle o' beer put away, an' I'll hev it out."

So saying, Alf arose in great good-humor and proceeded to make good his offer.

At first sight it would be supposed that this offer did not particularly interest North River Nat, as he had received no invitation whatever; but it remained a fact that the matter was of great interest to him.

Alf came out into the hall, and as he did so he explained:

"Beer is a luxury with me, now my pocket-book is bu'sted, an' I keep it hid in this closet."

North River Nat started. He had seen nothing of the beer, and did not know whether it was in the closet or not; but one other thing was certain—he was there, and if Alf came in he would certainly be discovered.

What was to be done?

Acting on the impulse of the moment, the boy stepped down from the trunk, seized the door and held fast. Alf laid hold on the opposite side and pulled gently. It did not open. He pulled again, using more strength. Still it did not open.

"That's queer," he observed; "I never knowed this door ter stick before. I reckon the wet weather swelled the wood."

He gave a jerk. It was a severe trial for Nat, who felt sure that the next effort would result in favor of Alf. That person, however, turned back toward the main room.

"I reckon this will open it," he said, picking up a long, dull knife, the blade of which was strong if not sharp.

Idle curiosity is easily aroused, and Greggs and Parsons, understanding that he proposed to pry the door open, arose and followed him. In the mean while, North River Nat had been doing some rapid thinking. He knew that he could not long "hold the fort" against Alf, and he laid his plans for rapid action. He heard the other men moving, and, springing back to the top of the trunk, laid hold of the window.

This swung on hinges like a door, and had once been furnished with a hook by which to secure it, but this had long since gone the way of all things earthly—at least, it was not on the window.

Quickly Nat swung the sash back.

All three men were in the hall.

The boy was as nimble as a cat, and having conceived the plan of going through the window to the next room, he acted promptly. With a quick movement he squirmed to the level of the window, slipped through, and dropped almost noiselessly on the other side—an achievement of which a contortionist might not have been ashamed.

"I thought the knife would open it," said Alf, at this moment, as he pulled the closet door open. "Now for the beer."

Nat looked sharply around. The men were between him and the way of retreat; he could not go down as he had come up, and they would soon return to the room. What could he do? The front window was open, but the best way seemed to be to hide for a while.

He had selected a place for this when Alf unexpectedly appeared in the doorway, bottle in hand.

"Hullo!" he said, blankly.

He had seen Nat, and was staring at him in amazement. How the boy had come there he did not know.

"Here's an infernal spy!" he abruptly added, and a most hostile look appeared on his face. "I say, you young scamp, what are you doin' here?"

The sentence was not finished. Nat did not care so very much about Alf, but was very anxious that Greggs and Parsons should not see his

face. He could conceive of but one way to prevent this, and the open window seemed to be the key to the situation.

Quickly he made a rush toward it; a few steps took him to the spot. He took a hurried survey. Owing to the fact that the house was so small and so old-fashioned, it was only a few feet to the ground.

He must risk the leap or be captured.

Alf saw his intention, and rushed forward with outstretched hands. Forgetting the fact that he had no valuables, he believed he had discovered a thief.

He reached out to grasp him, but as he did so the boy disappeared—he had taken the leap.

Short as the distance seemed it proved to be no trifling affair. Nat alighted on ~~the~~ feet, but experienced a heavy shock and fell to ~~the~~ ground. He was up again in a moment and running away, and then he had no fear. He plunged into the thickest part of the shanties, and did not pause until he had reached Riverside Boulevard. Then he came to a halt in a retired place.

"Great ginger!" he panted, "that was a pestiferous close shave. Don't want another jump like that. It driv my legs right up through my body, arnd I reckon my hip-bone must be stickin' up above my shoulders. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

He paused to brush the dust from his knees, and then resumed:

"I've been in another burglarious scrape. North River Nat, this won't do. It's ag'in' the law ter introod in a private house, even ef villains live thar, arnd you must keep out on 'em. The majesty o' law is sacred ter all honest minds. Assooreedly. Still, the idee is strong in my mind that in Greggsy arnd Parsons I hev struck 'ile, so ter remark."

Still keeping his place, he tried to recall what he had overheard when in the closet.

Two remarks stood out distinctive and suggestive. Parsons had said that he and Greggs had "dropped a man the other night," and Greggs had added that they were engaged upon "a very peculiar case."

"Fits like a glove!" decided the boy. "It would be rayther a pecooliar case ef they worked fur the Injun doctor, arnd ef they was the ones thart fell afoul o' poor Foretop Tom, it sorter explains what Parsons said. Hello!"

He started as he saw two men crossing the Boulevard. They were Greggs and Parsons, and they were walking rapidly.

"Scared out, eh?" thought Nat. "Wal, now, I hev a presentiment tha t it's my bounden dooty ter foiler 'em ag'in, ef I kin. Oh! that's whar they're goin', is it?"

At that point there was a break in the wall which made the western boundary of the Boulevard, with a vacant lot beyond, between the street and the river. The men had turned into this lot.

"They're either goin' ter cross the river in a boat, or ketch onter a movin' train. They go mighty slow past hyer, when draggin' a hull boodle o' freight-cars. We'll see!"

He hurried across the boulevard, and then waited in the cover of the wall until the man was nearly through the lot. They passed along the side of the steep hill which rises at that point, but the moment they disappeared, Nat ran after them. His faith that they would take one of the two courses mentioned by him was so strong that he had no fear of losing them otherwise.

When next he caught sight of them they were crossing the tracks of the Hudson River Road. Nat could hear no train approaching, and as they did not seem to be looking for one, he fell back on the boat theory.

The shipping interest is not lively at this point of the river, but he could see two schooners just off the land, while several row-boats were drawn up out of the water. The men were proceeding toward one of these, and Nat composedly sat down on the hillside.

"I reckon I've got ter let 'em go, or else swim the pestiferous old river, and they might lead me a chase o' several miles. I won't try it. Assooreedly not!"

Greggs and Parsons promptly entered a boat, it was pushed off, and then one of them began to use the oars. The boat was at once headed due west.

"Goin' over ter Jersey, by ginger. I thought so."

It did appear that such was the men's destination, for up to the time when their craft vanished from his gaze in the darkness it steadily held its first course. He looked across the broad stream to where the Jersey bluffs showed grim and dark on the other side, and then arose.

"Go it, ye pestiferous snakes!" he muttered. "I ain't so sitterated thart I kin foller ye now, but I'm on the trail, and I'll git thar jest the same. I reckon this case is jest erbout rich enough fur my blood, arnd ef I don't lay the Injun doctor out flatter than a pan-cake, I ain't the ex-pride o' the Five Points. Assooreedly!"

The boy retraced his steps to the Boulevard. Having a wholesome respect for the man Alf, he did not venture to go near Eighty-first street again, but walked a few blocks north, and then took an easterly course.

It had been his intention to go back to Daniel Beckwith's at once, but something occurred to change his plans. He had just reached Ninth avenue when a man passed down that street at a brisk pace.

Nat came to a sudden stop, and then turned the corner and looked after him.

It was Doctor Chippewa Holdsworth!

"Hyar's game!" thought the young detective. "The yarb doctor is goin' som'ers in hot haste, arnd it becomes my solemn dooty ter foller. I'll do it!"

And he fell in behind Chippewa, keeping at a safe distance, and watching keenly for danger.

Holdsworth, however, did not once look behind him, but, having reached Eighty-first street, ascended the stairs to the Elevated Road. Nat did the same. Each purchased a ticket, and as a down-train at that moment arrived, promptly took passage. The boy entered a car behind that occupied by the Indian doctor, and the pursuit was continued by rail.

CHAPTER VII.

DOCTOR CHIPPEWA'S SCHEME.

THE young detective had taken position at the front end of the car, and from this point he could watch to see when the Indian doctor left the train, without danger of losing him. It was a long ride, for Chippewa sat nearly motionless until the corner of Sixth avenue and Fourteenth street was reached. Then he got out, descended the stairs and started east through the latter thoroughfare.

He seemed to think that he was late, for he stepped out briskly, and compared his watch with the big, round clock on the opposite side of the street.

North River Nat followed patiently, and was led to Union Square. The hour was not yet so late that the average New Yorker thought it time to retire, and the light of the electric tower descending upon and through the trees made checker-board work of black and white, light and shade, upon the ground and the many persons who occupied the benches.

Dr. Chippewa strolled through the Park, looking sharply at the loungers.

"He's lookin' fur some one, arnd thart one is a woman," thought the attentive pursuer. "Reckon he's got an ap'intment."

His theory was soon verified. Holdsworth started, and then went forward and greeted a girl on one of the benches. Nat's sharp eyes at once marked her as one of the lower classes—probably a servant. Whatever she was the Westerner did not hesitate to sit down beside her.

"Now whar do I come in?" thought Nat.

Strong in the faith that what was to be said would be of interest to him, he determined to hear it. Circumstances were somewhat in his favor. The other benches being so crowded was one good thing, and the shadow of the trees was another.

Nat sauntered as near as he dared, and then listened eagerly. He was well rewarded.

The name of the girl proved to be Kitty Roslyn, and she was evidently pleased with Holdsworth. He talked in his blandest way, and was as polite as if she was a princess, but it soon transpired that he was tempting her to crime.

She was a servant in a boarding-house, and he wanted her to steal some jewelry from certain boarders and put it in the trunk of one Erwin Heselton, another boarder, with the purpose of having that unfortunate man proved the thief and, of course, arrested at once.

Kitty demurred. She had never been a criminal, and though of weak nature, did not wish to be; but Doctor Chippewa used all his eloquence. He not only flattered and coaxed her, but produced money which he offered her then and there if she would agree to do the work.

She hesitated—yielded. She was poor and weak-minded, and in the end she agreed to do all that he asked.

This being settled, they separated. She said that she had a call to make on Avenue B before going home, and walked away in that direction;

while Doctor Chippewa went down Fourth avenue.

All this North River Nat had heard without being discovered.

"Wal, hyar's a go!" he thought. "Chippy is a terror on wheels, arnd he's goin' ter ruin—Say, I've got an idee. I'll see Erwin Heselton right away ef I kin."

He hunted up a Directory and, by good luck, found the name he sought. The address was Bank street, and he made all possible haste to get to that place. He was soon in the presence of Heselton, who proved to be a fine-looking young man whom Nat liked at first sight.

The boy plunged into his subject at once, and though Heselton was, at first, uncommunicative, developments followed. Heselton said that he had heard of Holdsworth, but knew no reason why he should be his enemy; but when Nat, who had an idea, asked if he knew Eudora Beckwith, they both saw clearer.

Heselton had originally come from Herkimer county, like the Beckwiths; Eudora had once been his promised wife; but when some misunderstanding arose they had quarreled and separated, and Erwin had decided to leave New York and go West.

When this was told it occurred to Nat that Holdsworth, not knowing that the lovers had had trouble, and desiring Eudora for his own wife, had formed this scheme to separate them forever. Heselton coincided. He was as much attached to Eudora as ever, and when he heard of her danger, he decided to defer the Western trip, remove to the house of a friend up-town, and help fight her battles.

Nat had revealed to him all that he thought prudent about the case. The young New Yorker was too shrewd to tell all he knew to any comparative stranger.

The interview was prolonged for some time, and Heselton agreed to make the contemplated removal the next day, and then wait for further news from Nat. This being decided, the latter left the house, took the Elevated Road, and returned to Daniel Beckwith's house.

He was so late in getting back that he barely missed being locked out; Katie McKeever had sat up for him, but her patience had been nearly exhausted before he came. Nat contrived to put her in a good-humor, and then retired.

The next morning Eudora sent him out on a short errand, and then there was no more for him to do. It was evident that Daniel Beckwith told the truth when he said that the only object in hiring him was to have him near in case there were new developments in regard to Foretop Tom.

Foretop Tom did not return, and the police were formally notified. This step had not been taken before for two reasons—Tom, like most sailors, was very uncertain, and he would certainly resent an alarm if he was all right.

North River Nat was no sooner at liberty than he set off for the pier where Patrolman Snyderham believed that the sailor had met with foul play.

The place during the day was very unlike what it was at night. Wilson was not there as a watchman, and business was very lively all along the pier. Nat saw with considerable satisfaction that the same vessels were still at hand, for he had come with the intention of interviewing the crews more thoroughly.

It seemed odd to him that any tragedy could have taken place there and they be wholly ignorant of it. If Foretop Tom had been murdered and thrown into the water there would have been a splash, while if the body had been conveyed to the boat, it must have been taken across the deck of one of the larger craft.

While he stood on the edge of the pier a voice hailed him from the deck of a schooner near at hand.

He looked, and recognized a sailor whom Wilson and Snyderham had questioned the night of the mystery.

"Hullo, my b'loved comtemporary," Nat returned. "May I come aboard?"

"Come on," was the reply.

Nat promptly obeyed, and sat down beside the two sailors who were idling there.

"This is a sharp rat I seen the other night," explained his former acquaintance.

"Rats hev teeth, arnd they bite like Cæsar," returned Nat, suggestively.

"I don't believe you want ter bite me."

"Assooreedly not. I ain't on the war-path ter any great extent jest now."

"Has that missin' man been found?"

"No, sir; he ain't."

"What d'ye think on't?"

"I think some pestiferous critter did him a wrong arnd malev'lent act, by ginger!"

The sailors exchanged glances.

"He war a salt-water rover, jest like you two, arnd you ought ter feel moved ter pity fur him ef a land-shark got away with him."

"That's about so."

"I can't git the idee outer my head, Mr. Sailor Man, thart somebody 'round hyar knowed more erbout thart affair than was tol'."

"Why so?"

"Your schooner was right hyar, arnd the row-boat must 'a' b'en jest beyond. I b'lieve the roughs crossed this deck, by ginger!"

Nat had no reason to think so, but he wanted to impress the sailor, so he spoke with feigned confidence.

"You're 'way off, youngster, but thar is one thing cropped up this mornin' which means business."

"What's that?"

"You see this handsome gent hyar."

The sailor pointed to his companion.

"Yes."

"Wal, he's Jack Riker, an' he's pretty nigh home, fur his sister lives in the house across the way; the biggest one, ye see. Wal, his sister tol' him news this mornin' when he called on her."

"What news?"

"She asked him who had the drunken squabble on this pier Monday night."

"Was there one?"

"Nobody knows o' one, but she says she seen it."

"Mebbe that was them sharks onter Foretop Tom."

"Shoot me ef I don't think so, myself, an' I've notified the perlice."

"That's bad."

"Why bad?"

Nat did not care to state that he wanted the detective work in the case all to himself, so he explained his exclamation by saying that he referred to the news of the "drunken squabble."

"What was it like?" he added.

"Wal, she only chanced ter look out the window, an' she seen the squabble, an' then she says two o' the men brought a third outer this very craft. She thought one o' our crew was on a spree, an' never suspected anything wrong."

"Didn't I tell ye Foretop Tom was brung onter this 'ere schooner?" asked Nat, triumphantly.

"You only guessed at it."

"It's a mighty good guesser that gits things straight, ain't it?" the young detective retorted. "What a feller don't know he must git at by instinct. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things. Assooreedly! Now, Misther Sailor Man, be you sure nobody o' your cr w had a hack at Foretop Tom? Likewise, be you sure he ain't on board now?"

The sailor answered both questions affirmatively.

"Then he was taken away in that boat I seen, that night, dead or alive, arnd it's my dooty ter find out which."

"Why don't you start in as a detective?" asked the sailor, laughing at what he thought the absurdity of the idea.

"Stranger things hev happened," Nat coolly answered, as he arose to go. "Never guess how fur a cat kin jump until you've seen her try it with a rat fur a target!"

With this sage advice the boy left the schooner.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEN FROM JERSEY.

WITHOUT wasting any time North River Nat went to the next pier above. Around the point of this the boat in which he believed Foretop Tom had been taken away, dead or alive, had gone that dark night when he sat and watched the river. Possibly some one there had seen it. If there was a night-watchman, and he could find him, something might come of it.

He had the good fortune to find this man on the pier, but he declared that he had neither seen or heard anything unusual, the night of Foretop Tom's disappearance.

Patrolman Snyderham had already been around and asked him these questions.

Nat soon found that nothing was to be learned there, and he went away somewhat disappointed. He had another point in mind, however, and he lost no time in making his way to the foot of Eighty-first street. Carefully avoiding the neighborhood where Alf lived, he walked along Riverside Boulevard, turned into the vacant lot before mentioned, and went on down to the river.

A small sail-boat was skimming over the water just off-shore, and two or three boys stood on the bank, wistfully watching its movements.

Nat knew just about where the boat in which Griggs and Parsons went away had been beached, and seeing a small lad seated on another boat, he went to his side.

"Why ain't you out sailin', my frien'?" he asked.

"Ain't got no boat," the small boy replied.

"You seem ter like the water."

"I do."

"Kin you swim?"

"You bet!"

"You orter hev a boat."

The unknown lad turned his gaze upon Nat. The latter was several years his senior, and he felt pleased at such notice, and the mention of his earnest desire.

"I wish I did have one," he agreed.

"Spend a good 'eal o' yer time down hyar by the river, don't yer?"

"Yes."

"Know who all these boats b'long ter, I dar' say."

"Ev'ry one."

"Any strangers—from Jersey, frinstance—ever tie up their water vehicles hyar?"

"Oh! yes; there was one here last night from Jersey. I know who it belonged to, too—his name is Parsons, and he lives in Hoboken. The boat was beached right there!"

The lad pointed, and if Nat had before doubted that he had knowledge of what he told, that gesture would have settled all. The boat had been just where he said.

"I know a Parsons over in Hoboken," continued Nat, blandly. "Wonder ef it's the same one? Whar does this Parsons live, anyhow—what street?"

"I don't know, but his first name is Simon. If you want to know about him, Alf Perriby who lives on Eighty-first street, can tell you."

"Never mind," replied Nat, hastily, for he had no desire to meet the redoubtable Alf again. "You didn't see Parsons arnd his boat hyar Monday night, did ye?"

"No," answered the boy, after brief meditation. "He wasn't here in the evening, or, at least, I didn't see him, but he was here just before dark. I saw him and a man named Greggs, who goes with him. They were talking with a man with long hair and wild clothes—he looked like a Western cowboy."

"You did see them, eh?"

"Yes."

"Hear w'ot they said?"

"Not a word."

Nat had learned all the small boy knew about the matter. He asked several more questions, but they only served to bring out minor points relating to what had already been told. Nat, however, had gained information of importance.

Doctor Chippewa had been in earnest conversation with Greggs and Parsons a short time before the supposed assault on Foretop Tom took place; and after they were through, the men from Jersey had re-entered their boat and rowed away down the river.

"I'll bet my hat Foretop Tom was decoyed ter the pier by some plausible lie, and then Gregory arnd Sime Parsons was thar ter fall on him like devorin' wolves," thought the young detective, as he walked away. "So Parsons lives in Hoboken, eh? Wal, I reckon my business will take me ter Jersey right away, quick. I want ter locate that pestiferous chap. Ef Foretop Tom is alive he may even now be shut up in Simon's Bastile. Assooreedly!"

With Nat to resolve was to act promptly when possible, and he entered a train on the Elevated Road and rode down to Christopher street. From there he took the ferry to Hoboken. When the boat touched the drop he passed out of the ferry-house, and there paused for a moment.

Which way was he to go?

The majority of his late fellow-passengers were hurrying toward the low, unpretentious railroad depot at the left, but he did not want to go out of town. He finally decided to walk on awhile and see what the vicinity looked like. He had never been in Hoboken but once before, and his knowledge of the place was limited.

He strolled away until he reached Washington street, when he turned to the right, but at Fourth went through to Bloomfield.

This was more to his liking, and he sauntered on with his hands in his pockets, surveying the passers-by as he did so. Thus far he had made no effort to find out where Parsons lived, and he was in no haste to do so.

He was studying Hoboken with an eye to business.

Suddenly he saw something which arrested all his attention. This had been casually drawn at first by a mastiff which was stalking majes-

tically along; led by a man, but as Nat looked at the man he forgot the dog.

"Great ginger!" he muttered, "ef thart fel ler's back ain't like Sime Parsons's I'm gittin' blind. Don't seem posseble that I kin be in sech luck, but it does look amazin'ly like Simon, hisself!"

Just then the man partially turned his head.

"It's him, by ginger!" Nat affirmed.

The young detective at once became all attention. Luck had favored him singularly, and far more than he would have dared hope. Chance had brought him within sight of one of the suspected criminals, and he determined to keep him in view.

Apparently Parsons was unconscious of the boy's proximity, though it was not likely that he would recognize him, anyhow, and the mastiff would prevent him from doing any fine work to avoid being followed.

It seemed a very simple matter to run him down.

Nat began the work, but it did not prove a brief one. Parsons was evidently out to give his dignified canine companion an airing, and this he proceeded to do, traveling in a roundabout way and turning many corners.

He did not throw the pursuer off the track. Where he went, Nat followed, taking great care not to be discovered. He kept well back, and was ready to assume a careless air and position whenever the man should turn.

Half an hour was passed in this way, and then Parsons paused in front of a low, old-fashioned wooden house which stood in a small yard. He opened the gate and passed inside.

"Hived, at last, by ginger!" commented Nat.

Parsons passed along one side of the house, and as the boy sauntered past he saw what seemed to be a dog-kennel at the rear of the yard. He did not venture to stop, but went on at an easy pace, thinking as he went.

What was he to do next? It was one thing to learn where Parsons lived, and another to discover whether there was any sign of Foretop Tom about the place.

"I've got ter git a look inside that palatial shanty, but how shall I do it?" he muttered. "Thart is the question which agitates my youthul mind, by ginger!"

It was not often that Nat was at loss for an idea when one was wanting, and the fact that he had seen a girl in a white apron—evidently a servant—standing on the steps by the rear door gave him an idea very soon.

"But will it work?" he thought. "Thar are ins arnd outs to it, arnd nobody kin say what kind o' a pestiferous scrape I may run my head inter. May run right ag'in' Sime Parsons, hisself, first slap. Wal, what ef I do? He never has had a good look at me, arnd I don't b'lieve he'd hev any idee I was the same chap that jumped out o' Alf's winder. It's a go!"

He went to a confectionery store and purchased a pound of candy, which was put up in a paper box. Then he proceeded to a hardware store and had two sheets of thick wrapping-paper put around it and securely tied.

He then had a good-sized package, the nature of which no one could surmise by its appearance.

Next he removed his necktie and collar, and partially battered in the crown of his derby hat. All this was to change his appearance, and when he had put a few more touches to his toilet he really looked like a different person.

His preparations completed, he marched boldly back to the house he wished to enter, walked through the yard and rapped at the rear door.

The same white-aproned servant-girl appeared.

"May I arsk yer name, miss?" said Nat, holding the package prominently forward.

"My name! Why, of course. It is Lena Tryon."

"Assooreedly. Sech was my idee. Is thar a gent hyar who is waitin' fur this package?"

"Not that I know of."

"You'd know it ef he was. This hyar package is fur you."

"Why, I thought you said it was for a gent."

"Not 'zactly, uiss. It's rayther a complicated a'fair. Ye see a gent met me on the street arnd axed me would I carry this package ter Miss Lena Tryon, at this house. O' course I sez I would. 'Wal, do it,' sez he, givin' me a quarter, 'arnd I'll meet ye thar.' Mebbe I'll git that fu'st; anyhow, I won't be long behind ye. Now mind,' sez he, awful solemn-like, 'this package ain't ter go out o' your hands until you give it ter me. It's fur Miss Tryon, but I am the gent ter pass it over ter her, arnd nobody

else. Ketch on? sez he, I told him I did ketch on, arnd hyar I be."

The trim young servant seemed to think she knew from whom the present came.

She blushed a little, her eyes brightened, and she replied:

"No gentleman has come yet."

"Then I'll hev ter set down arnd wait fur him."

Nat made a motion to sit on the step, but she stopped him.

"Not there," she said; "come into the kitchen."

"Be you alone?"

"Yes, in this part of the house. The folks are up-stairs; they won't come here. Walk right in!"

She spoke cordially, and Nat obeyed promptly. He little suspected how warmly he was destined to be entertained in that house.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT THE GENTLEMAN NAT WISHED TO SEE.

The young detective was inside the house, and prepared to carry out the plan he had formed. The rather-pretty servant looked covetously at the package, but he hung to it grimly and sat down.

"Shouldn't be a tall s'prised ef thar was a few pounds o' diamonds in hyar," he observed.

"Mebbe it is the royal Croker-noah jewel."

"Is it heavy?" asked Lena, plainly a good deal interested.

"Not so very. Diamonds ain't heavy, onless you git a bigger c'lection than most folks hev."

"Nobdy would send me diamonds."

"They'd look wal on ye, by ginger!" declared Nat, diplomatically. "You've got a boss complexion, arnd it would set 'em off fine."

"I see you know how to flatter, if you are young."

"I've got eyes in my head, arnd I know a pretty girl when I see her. Assooreedly! I say, this floor is so white arnd clean I'm 'most afeard ter tech my shoes to it. Do you like ter work?"

"No, but I have to," Lena frankly replied.

"Many in the famly?"

"Only three."

"Don't see any children's playthings 'round."

"There ain't any children."

"Lemme see—what's the name o' yer boss?"

"Carl Veazey."

"I s'pose the famly consists o' him arnd his wife arnd—who else is thar?"

"Their son, Percy."

North River Nat was disappointed. He had expected to hear that the owner of the house was named Parsons. It occurred to him, however, that Parsons might be a man of many names—or Greggs's real name might be Veazey.

"Any comp'ny at present?" he continued.

"No."

"Didn't I see a sailor chap hyar t'other day?"

"I haven't seen any."

Lena's manner was not only unsuspicious, but the personification of honesty.

"What sort o' a lookin' chap is Carl Veazey?" pursued Nat, patiently.

"He is an old man now, with hair white as snow. He don't go out of the house."

"Arnd Percy. Wo't o' him?"

"Oh! he is young—not over twenty-one."

Neither of these men could be Parsons, and Nat began to be discouraged and disgusted.

"Did I, or didn't I, see a mastiff out hyar in the yard?" he continued, in a less good-natured way.

"Oh! yes; that is Mr. Percy's dog."

"Who was leadin' the critter an hour or so ago?"

"I don't know his name; it was some friend of Mr. Percy."

"Do ye know whar he lives?"

"No. I never saw him but once or twice before."

"Arnd you ain't seen no sailor chap around hyar?"

"No."

It was the last question Nat had to ask. He had come to the conclusion that he was on the wrong scent, as far as that particular house was concerned, and the sooner he beat a graceful retreat from it, the better it would be. What he wanted now was to get outside, watch for Parsons to reappear, and resume the work of dogging him to his lair.

He had decided to leave the bogus package, and let Lena get her reward for answering his questions by eating the candy, when the door which led to the other part of the house suddenly opened and two men appeared.

The foremost was Simon Parsons!

The big rough's forehead was knit into a most ferocious scowl, and his gaze became at once

fixed upon Nat. The latter knew at once that a part of their conversation had been overheard, and recognized the fact that a storm was brewing, but he was not the person to be easily frightened.

He faced Parsons boldly.

"So," said the rough, in a harsh voice, "you want ter know all erabout me, do ye?"

"Who in the world be you, anyhow?" Nat coolly returned.

"Oh! you don't know me, eh?"

"Strikes me you're the individooal I seen with the dorg, but I can't call ye by name. Ef you're a digintary I'm sorry, by ginger, fur I want ter be on intermate terms with all great public men. Assooreedly!"

"I b'lieve you're a sneakin' spy."

"A what?"

"Why be you pumpin' this girl?"

"Great ginger! ain't I a right ter talk ter who I please? I uster hev, arnd I ain't heerd o' no act by Congress ter muzzle my tongue. Ontil sech an act is parsed I reckon said tongue will keep right on a-wobblin'."

"That's all very wal, but you won't gain anything by it. Who be you, anyhow?"

"My name is J. Quincy A. Twiggs."

"Don't lie ter me, boy!"

Parsons raised his voice, and tried by the volume thereof, and his ferocious scowl, to frighten the young detective. Nat, however, remained as cool as ever.

"Hez the court set you up as my guardien, mister? Ef so, I warnt ter know it. I were not arnticipatin' sech an honor, by ginger! Ef sech is the case, prove it. Trot out yer dockymen'try evidence! Perdooce the vital statistics! Exhibit the orptical conviction! Do this ef you're my guardien, arnd ef you ain't, remain forever silent. Assooreedly!"

Nat stretched out one hand with a gesture appropriate to this address, and looked as serious as an undertaker, but Parsons did not grow good-humored.

"Be you goin' ter explain?" he demanded.

"Nary explain."

"You don't leave hyar ontil ye do."

And the rough took his place by the outer door. Nat turned to the man he rightly conjectured was Percy Veazey.

"Does yender individooal own this house?" he asked.

"No," was the reply.

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Then I reckon I don't take no orders from him!"

"I uphold him in all he says," Percy declared.

"Then I reckon I don't take no orders from you!" retorted Nat. "Fack is, I came hyar on a peaceable errand, arnd I ain't goin' ter be trod on by nobody. Assooreedly not! Hoboken is a part of the President's domain, arnd he arnd me are on good terms. Ef I am merlested, I shall appeal ter him. Say, mister, be you goin' ter git out o' my way?"

Nat walked toward Parsons, his manner as cool as ever, but with a determined air under all.

"No, I ain't," Parsons returned; "you're goin' ter stay hyar. Kin you make room fur him in the suller?"

The last question was addressed to Percy, but the latter slowly shook his head.

"I don't like this, Sime," he observed.

"The kid is a spy; be we goin' ter let him go lopin' erround, an' lyin' about us?"

"Well, if you say the word, down into the cellar he goes."

"No, he don't!" Nat retorted. "I'm no vegetarian, arnd I'll be booted ef I want ter go arnd reside with yer pestiferous old pertaters, cabbages arnd carrots. Let me out o' thart door, or thar'll be an 'arthquake hyar right off, quick. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

"Veazey, ketch the young snake," directed Parsons.

"I'll keep the door; you catch him."

The change was made, and Parsons advanced with an evil glitter in his eyes. The girl, Lena, had been in a panic ever since this scene began, her sympathies plainly being with Nat, and she now stepped in front of the big rough.

"You sha'n't touch him!" she declared. "This is an outrage; let the boy alone!"

Parsons caught her and, without a word, set her aside; in his opinion it was no time to fool with women. Nat saw that he was thoroughly in earnest in his threat to seize him, and that only prompt action could save him from captivity in the cellar.

He resolved to act thus promptly, but how was he to do it? His strength would amount to

nothing opposed to that of Parsons—what was he to do? He had no time for an elaborate plan, but he formed a line of action, such as it was, at once.

Parsons came on. He seemed to be afraid that Nat would dodge and run, but as the boy retreated, instead, he grew more confident.

"Come, you needn't hang off!" he said. "I've got ye ez sure ez preachin'!"

And he stretched out his hands to grasp the boy.

Just then Nat moved. His one chance was before him, and he determined to make the most of it. Like most boys he knew his strong point—it lay in his agility, and ability to "dodge and run" in a way no man could equal, least of all, such a ponderous fellow as Parsons. Nat made the venture.

Suddenly gathering on his feet he made a feint as though to dodge to the left. Parsons promptly sprung that way. Another moment and Nat shot past him on the other side, laughing derisively as he did so. He had gained one point on the villain, anyway.

The way of retreat he had marked out lay through the door by which the two men had come to the kitchen—the only way open to him, in fact. He believed that it led to the front part of the house, and that by following this course he could gain the front door and pass to the street.

He jerked the door open, and then came to a halt. Instead of a hall he saw only a stairway; it led to the upper part of the house. This was not at all favorable—what was he to do?

Parsons's steps crashed behind him, and Nat hesitated only a moment. He darted up the stairs, two steps at a time. What lay before him he did not know, but it would not do to let his pursuer get hold of him.

Reaching the next floor he found himself in a hall-like room which was lighted only by a window set in the roof. Plainly, he could not reach this. Four doors opened from the hall; he must go through one of these at a venture. Parsons was clattering up the stairs, muttering threats at every step. All that was ugly in the man's nature was aroused, and he was liable to do any dark deed if he caught the boy.

Nat quickly opened one of the doors.

It led to an unoccupied room which faced the street, and an abundance of light streamed in through the glass of a bay-window. He ran to that point and raised a lower sash. Clearly, his only way was to repeat his feat at Ali's house and leap out.

He swung his body through and poised for the jump, but at that moment Parsons rushed forward with hands outstretched to seize him!

CHAPTER X.

NAT CREATES A STORM.

FOR a moment the result was in doubt. Nat had to get his balance before leaping, or he would fall in a heap and probably break his bones. Parsons thrust his arms out of the window; his hands moved toward Nat; his fingers were bent preparatory to closing upon the boy's arm.

They did close—upon empty air.

Just when his triumph seemed certain, Nat jumped.

It was a leap the young detective was not at all willing to make; but it was in his favor that the ground below was soft and spongy.

He struck squarely on his feet and retained that position, though the shock was no trifling affair. On the whole, though, he had been more fortunate than he dared to hope, and he promptly ran through the gate to the street.

Then he looked back. Parsons was at the window, glaring at him fiercely.

"My b'loved contemporany," quoth the young detective, coolly, "ef ye want ter go ter Police Headquarters arnd hev this thing settled, come right erlong!"

Parsons closed the window with a bang and disappeared, but Nat did not wait to see if he would continue the pursuit. The boy beat a retreat to the next corner, and there took refuge in a convenient covert. He wished to see Parsons come out, and then to follow him once more.

"Thar's nothin' in that house thart I want," he soliloquized, "but ef I kin track the pestiferous critter ter his own den, I may find Foretop Tom. I'll try it!"

He waited, first with patience and then with growing doubt. Parsons did not appear, and half an hour rolled by. Then a woman came out of the house and moved his way. He recognized Lena, and believed he should get some news from her, at least.

She turned the corner, and then paused in sur-

prise at sight of him. A look of pleasure appeared on her face.

"I am so glad to see you safe!" she exclaimed.

"Assooreedly," Nat replied. "I thank ye right hearty fur yer good will, arnd I know you was in my favor when them critters was tryin' ter scoop me in. Say, whar is that measly Sime Parsons, now?"

"He's gone."

"He is?"

"Yes."

"I didn't see him come out."

"He went through the back yard, over to the next street," Lena explained.

"That settles it; he's got away slick ez mice. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

"What in the world does this all mean?"

"Jest what I'd like ter know," replied Nat, with the most innocent air imaginable. "When I d'liver any more merchandise fur a stranger I'll be older than I be now. I hev an idee that it was all part o' a plot ter kidnap an unslowphisterated youth—which is me."

"There was nothing but candy in the package you brought me."

"That settles it, sure. Him who give it ter me was in kerhoots with Simon ter abductionize me. Set that down fur a fact. I reckon it was my perlitical enemies that put up the job on me, 'cause I went ag'in' 'em in the larst city election. Great ginger! hez Jersey so backslid ez this? Hez the time come that her honist citizens are ter be massacred arnd gobbled like mad-dogs?"

"You are a queer boy," said Lena, wonderingly.

"I'll be queerer ef I don't light out fur home, which is on Willow street. Lena, you're a fine girl, arnd you've been my fr'en'; I won't forget it. Fur now, farewell!"

"Wait a little. I'd like to know—"

"Can't stop now; I've got ter git home, or my friends will worry 'bout me. Good-by, Lena!"

And North River Nat hastened away. He knew that it was useless to delay longer, and he was anxious to get back to New York. Night was at hand, and he had not been at the Beckwith house since morning. What would they think of his prolonged absence? and what had happened there during the day?

His experience with Hoboken had been somewhat rough, and he was glad enough to see the old ferry-house again. He entered, paid his three cents with good will, and went on board the Christopher street boat, which was about to start for New York.

The metropolis had never looked more pleasant to him than it did then, as he stood at the forward end of the ferry-boat and looked ahead. He had been so warmly entertained in Hoboken, that he was glad to get back to the city of his nativity.

Taking the Elevated Road, he was soon at Beckwith's.

Katie McKeever had begun to think that the new addition to the family was a mere scapegoat, for he certainly was not fulfilling Daniel Beckwith's directions—to be near when wanted—and she would have given him a serious lecture had she not had a message to give him instead.

Mr. Beckwith wanted to see him at once. Nat received this notification quietly, and at once went to the self-styled invalid's room. He was there in his big chair, as usual, with the colored man in attendance.

"My boy," said Beckwith, in a very melancholy tone, "I sent for you a long time ago."

"I was out, takin' an airin'."

"I hope you do not recklessly expose yourself. Your health should be your first consideration."

"Asscoreedly."

"Dr. Holdsworth," pursued the invalid, "has given me a theory in regard to my missing brother. He thinks that poor Thomas was kidnapped and taken away on a vessel which could get no sailors by honest means."

"Humph!" dryly commented Nat.

"Now as to the men in the row-boat. Do you think they were sailors?"

"No, I don't."

"Why not?"

"Cause they looked like landsmen."

"Then you saw them somewhat plainly?"

"Wal, not so plain, but a sailor arnd a landsman in a boat are cads o' a diff'rent color. Asscoreedly!"

"Yet the kidnappers might have been South street land-sharks, so to speak, working for the captain of the vessel."

"They might 'a' been members o' the President's Cabinet, but I don't b'lieve they was."

"Evidently you don't believe in Holdsworth's theory."

"I don't."

"But Thomas has gone somewhere."

"That is a safe asseveration," Nat agreed. At this point Beckwith turned his head toward the negro.

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah!"

"I think the cap of the key-hole is misplaced."

"The which, sah?"

"I feel a very perceptible draught—the wind strikes upon my shoulder harshly—and I think it must blow through the key-hole of the door. Probably you will find that the cap has failed to fall into place. See to it at once!"

Nat winked solemnly at B. Franklin Betts, and that colored gentleman, who lacked Nat's powers of self-control, was obliged to hug his mouth with both hands to keep from laughing aloud. He found the cap in place, but to humor his master, reported that it had been to one side.

"I thought so," Beckwith answered. "It is much more comfortable now, but I fear I have already taken cold."

"Why," exclaimed Nat, "the mercury stan's at eighty above zero, out o' doors!"

"No doubt, but I am very susceptible to any draught."

"Tell ye what'd do ye good, mister," Nat abruptly said.

"What?"

"Go over ter the Polo Grounds arnd play nine innings o' base-ball. You could hold down third base, whar you'd git some daisies, singin' right from the bat, or ef the pitcher was a fair specimen o' a human cannon, you'd enjoy life ez a ketcher; while ez fur runnin' the bases, I'd advise ye ter make a home-run lick ev'ry time ye was 'up,' arnd then canter the circuit o' the diamond like a two-year-old colt. Ef you could rap the sphere over center-field fence, the grandstand arnd free-seats would jest split their throats in yer honor."

Nat gave this information with a sort of solemn enthusiasm, but Beckwith looked at him in horror.

"Boy!" he exclaimed.

"Yes?"

"Do you know I am a hopeless invalid?"

"Is the Injun doctor's yarbs workin' on ye so bad as that, mister?"

"They are all that keep me alive."

"Mebbe; but ef I's goin' ter swaller the stuff, I'd want my life insured in advance, by ginger!"

"You, too, are prejudiced; but let it pass. I did not engage you to give me advice."

"The best doctor-stuff I know on is pure air, arnd that is what you should take. The atmosphere o' this room would give a statoo the wu'st kind o' a malady. As long as you breathe p'ison at this rate you'll be a subjet fur a doctor, arnd quacks like Chippy will reap a harvest outer ye. Assooreedly!"

Beckwith's face had flushed. For years his most powerful emotion had been melancholy vexation, but he was genuinely angry at last. On the table beside him lay a book called, "The Diagnosis and Cure of all Diseases," which he had read with interest because he thought he found proof therein that he was afflicted with each and every one of the complaints it mentioned. He now seized this book, and flung it at Nat's head with such good aim, that the boy only escaped by ducking his head quickly.

"Franklin!" cried the hypochondriac.

"Yes, sah."

"Open that door!"

"Yes, sah."

"Quick, you snail!"

"Yes, sah."

But Mr. Betts, accustomed to moving like a dignified cat in his master's room, was not quick enough to please the angry invalid. The latter sprung up himself, strode to the door and opened it.

"Go!" he said, addressing Nat, and pointing to the hall. "Go, and never dare set foot in my house again. You are discharged, and I will never receive any communication from you again. I give you ten minutes to leave the house."

"Assooreedly," replied Nat, as coolly as though nothing unusual was occurring. "Remember me ter Foretop Tom when he comes back, arnd say ter him that I think I can tell who stole him. Ef I see him afore you do, never mind the message. Good-day!"

And then Nat walked out of the room with all the composure in the world.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH MISFORTUNES MULTIPLY.
MR. BECKWITH banged the door to, and then

returned to his chair. B. Franklin Betts was watching him with his eyes and mouth open to their full extent. Never before had he seen his master so angry; never before had he seen him move so agilely; and never before had he seen him so reckless of exposure to fresh air.

"Franklin!" exclaimed the invalid.

"Yes, sah."

"Give me a dose of the medicine in the blue bottle."

"But, sah, it ain't time fur it fur half an hour—"

"Bring me the medicine!" emphatically ordered Mr. Beckwith. "I am master here, and I will show all the croakers that it is not injurious. I will take it when I see fit. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sah."

Mr. Betts passed it over in fear and trembling, for he was utterly upset by the new order of things. What would occur next he did not know—perhaps it would be an earthquake which would shake the house down upon his head.

"Have I sunk so low," demanded Beckwith, when he had swallowed the alleged medicine, "that a boy talks like that to me in my own house? Have I, in my illness, lost all hold on my own affairs? If he dared be so impudent, what do the rest say of me? What do the servants say? What does Eudora say? Tell me that, Franklin!"

"Really, sa-sa-sah, I don't kn-kn-know what—"

"Silence! Your stammering tongue betrays you. Don't lie to me, you scoundrel!"

Beckwith, as poor Betts afterward expressed it, "was on the war-path in dead earnest," and his anger was all the more riotous because he had so long covered it over with the mantle of melancholy. The unjust suspicion had suddenly occurred to him that Eudora was not the dutiful daughter she had seemed, and the awful glare of his eyes made his servant's knees knock together.

"Answer me!" thundered the self-styled invalid.

"Wh-wh-what shall I say, sah?" chattered Franklin.

"Tell me what infamous thing Eudora has said against me. Your manner shows your guilty knowledge. What are you keeping back? Does she wish me dead? Speak out, sir—speak out!"

"Indeed, sah, I's never heerd her say a word derogatory to yer character an' a'flictions—"

"Enough! You, too, are against me. All are against me—servants, friends, daughter! All want me dead; I can rely on no one. My last friend went when Foretop Tom was taken from me. Poor brother! where is he now? Kidnapped—perhaps murdered. And he may never be avenged."

Tears actually appeared in the speaker's eyes. He had loved Foretop Tom second only to Eudora, and now that his sudden suspicion pointed to the latter as a traitress, he turned to the memory of lost Tom as the only thing dear to him.

Then he thought of North River Nat. He had relied on the boy to help identify the murderers, or kidnappers, as the case might be. If Nat went, would not his only witness be lost? Would not all hope vanish of avenging Tom?

The thought sobered and quieted him, and he scarcely stirred for thirty seconds. Then he formed a resolution. Nat had spoken severely to him, but was that any reason why he should put away the last hope of avenging his brother? He turned abruptly to B. Franklin Betts.

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah."

"Go down and tell that boy that I retract what I said. Tell him to remain in this house, as before."

"Yes, sah."

Betts disappeared from the room willingly; he only wished that he had been ordered to stay away. His peaceful occupation of standing behind his master's chair had been rudely broken in upon, and he had a vague fear that that gentleman was about to become violently insane.

"I see how it is!" muttered Beckwith, when he was once more alone. "My eyes are at last opened. Like all old and feeble persons I have become an incumbrance. Those whom I have loved wish me out of the way—even Eudora is against me. Franklin's stammering tongue revealed the truth!"

The speaker had devoted the last five years of his life to hugging hobbies, and he seized upon the new one with avidity, if not with pleasure.

In a few minutes Franklin returned, looking more frightened than ever.

"Well?" questioned Beckwith, sharply.

"Sah, the b-b-boy says he won't stay!"

"Won't stay?"

"No, sah; he says you ordered him out ob de house, an' he am a-goin', sah."

"Did he say this after you told him I wished him to stay?"

"Ye—ye—yes, sah."

"Why do you stammer, you knave?" demanded Beckwith, fiercely. "You never did so before. You are ridiculing me, are you? Very well, I'll settle with you, later. What's that boy doing?"

"Putting on his hat ter go, sah."

Mr. Beckwith sprung from his chair, his face flushed with anger, and, forgetting the cane without which he had not thought he could cross the room of late, tore the door open and strode out into the hall.

"It's come fo' suah!" cried Betts, raising his hands in horror. "He's gone ravin' crazy, an' we'll all be murdered by his frenzy. Oh! golly, why didn't dis niggah stay down in Car'liny!"

Down the stairs went Mr. Beckwith with steps as firm and heavy as those of a trooper, and he at once became the focus for three pairs of eyes. North River Nat, Eudora and Katie McKeevin were in the parlor hall, and the girls had evidently been trying to dissuade Nat from leaving. All, however, gazed in mute wonder as they saw the so-called feeble invalid transformed into an active man.

Beckwith strode to the front door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. Then he turned upon Nat.

"So you're going to leave the house, are you?" he sternly demanded.

"Assooreedly!" Nat coolly replied.

"I forbid it!"

"When I am discharged, I usooally git out. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

"Did Franklin tell you I had changed my mind, and wished you to remain?"

"He did."

"And you persisted in going?"

"Jes' so."

"I forbid it. You are my servant, legally employed by me, and I forbid your departure. You must obey me; I am master here. You shall not go!"

Nat had rarely ever been placed in a situation as peculiar as this, and for a moment he did not know what to do. He did not bear Beckwith a particle of ill-will, and his temper was wholly unruffled. He wished to do what was right, and was reluctant to abandon the Foretop Tom case. But how was he to deal with Daniel Beckwith?

At this crisis the boy's quick wit stood him in good use. He comprehended that the old gentleman's sudden exhibition of strength and activity was wholly the result of his anger, and was of the opinion that if he was allowed to have his own way without anything to ruffle his spirits, he might relapse into his old state.

The boy thrust his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest and faced Beckwith grimly.

"Be you my guardien?" he asked.

"I am your master."

"Hev you any legal right ter dispose c' my person? Kin you restrick my liberty, keep me in bondage, or incarcerate me in any pestiferous prison-cell? Ain't I a free moral agent? Can't I vote when I'm twenty-one, ef anybody will pay me fur it? Ain't I—"

"That will do. Enough of idle talk—you will remain here, as I said."

"Ez a pris'ner, eh?"

"Call it so, if you wish; you will remain!"

"Assooreedly! I ain't the chap ter kick when I can't help myself, arnd I'll stay, but one thing I want ter hev understood: I submit under protest. B. Franklin Betts, bear witness that I submit under protest."

Nat waved his hand solemnly toward the gentleman of color, who was peering over the top of the balusters on the floor above. Only half of his head had been visible, and that disappeared suddenly when Nat thus "gave away" his secret reconnoitering.

"Boy," added Beckwith, less severely, "I should think you would be willing to do as much as this for my poor, lost brother."

"I'd forgot Foretop Tom, but sence you order me ter remain, I'll take hold o' the case with vigor, arnd bring it to a successful climax."

"I ain't sure, father, that Nat is to be trusted," observed Eudora, gently.

"Oh! you are, eh?" grimly retorted Beckwith. "You are a pretty subject to offer consolation. Girl, I know you at last as you are: I know how you despise me; I know how you have often said that you wished me dead. Franklin Betts has told me all!"

"Oh! oh!" cried a shrill voice from the floor above, and Mr. Betts's black face and white

eyes reappeared above the balusters; "I never said nothink ob de kind, Miss Eudora. I 'clare ter gracious I nebber did—"

"Go back to your room, you scoundrel!" shouted Beckwith. "I'll be up there directly and attend to you. Yes, I'll lay that cane soundly over your back. That's what you need!"

"Oh! oh!" howled Franklin, as he beat a retreat.

"Now, girl," added Beckwith, addressing Eudora, "you and I may as well have an understanding. From this time I am going to be master of my own house. I have trusted you and the rest, only to find that I have taken serpents to my breast, and—"

"Father!" cried Eudora, imploringly.

"Don't dare interrupt me. I thought it bad enough to be a hopeless invalid, but misfortunes are multiplying. I find all my relatives and servants against me. Am I crushed? No, never! I will defeat you all!"

"But, father—"

"Not a word. From this hour there will be a new order of things here. I am going to be master. To-morrow I shall send for Doctor Chippewa Holdsworth, and install him in this house as my private physician. He will be in constant attendance on me, and I will see no one else. This is my ultimatum!"

With this terrible threat the self-styled invalid turned and went up-stairs with a firm step, not even touching the rail of the stairs as he went. The trio in the hall looked after him mutely, and Eudora and Katie, at least, were dumfounded.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW WAY OF COMMITTING SUICIDE.

Not a word was spoken by the trio until Mr. Beckwith had reached his room and slammed the door to after him; then North River Nat dropped into a chair and fairly shock with laughter.

"You m'ane little wretch!" cried Katie, "ye ought ter be ashamed ave yerself, ter laugh at such a toime—ye had that!"

"Why shouldn't I larff, my dear Katie?" Nat coolly asked.

"Can't you see Miss Eudora is broken-hearted?"

"Why should she be?"

"I've a good moind to hit yez a clip wid a club!" averred Katie. "It's killin' her ter see the ould jintleman in such a bad way, an' you a-snickerin' loike a hyena."

"My b'loved comtemporary," quickly returned Nat, "you don't diagnose this hyar case correct. The sun is risin' in the East, fur sure. Don't you worry about Mr. Beckwith; this is the first step toward his throwin' off the yoke o' error. Jest let the wheel keep on turnin', arnd he will acknowledge himself a wal man in less'n a fortnight."

A look of hope appeared on Eudora's face.

"Do you really think so?" she asked.

"Assoorely, I do."

"But he acts so strangely."

"His mad is up, arnd you see w'ot it did fur him. He didn't act much like a feeble invalid, did he? Oh! jest you keep quiet, arnd you'll see him all right."

"But he says he is going to bring the Indian doctor here to stay."

"I heerd him."

"That don't look favorable."

"He's struck on Chippy, who kin be perlite enough when he tries; a marn may smile, arnd be a villain still. Don't ye worry erbout Chippy, though; he'll come up at the end o' his rope with a jerk straightway."

"I only wish we could drive him off."

"We kin."

"How?"

"Thar are various ways. Do you know anything erbout the workin' arnd twistin' o' the law?"

"No."

"I do. Assoorely! Arnd one o' the items o' the law which governs our b'loved city is, that nobody kin practice medicine hyar 'thout a diplomer. Has Chippy got a diplomer? Guess not; the pestiferous critter never seen a medical school, I'll bet my left shoe!"

"Even if he had no diploma," answered Eudora, hesitatingly, "what can we do to stop him from practicing medicine?"

"Use the law ez a club, arnd hit him over the head with it, by ginger! Ef we hev him pulled in he will be fined fifty dollars fur each arnd ev'ry offense. Tharfore, ef we kin find ten o' his patients, all told, thar will be five hundred dollars in fines fur him ter pay."

"Do it, do it!" cried Katie. "It'll bankrupt the ould h'athen, I know!"

"Not so fast," Nat replied. "Ef he's sharp we can't bankrupt him, fur the law sez that even ef a marn practices 'thout a diplomer he kin collect his fees. Hence, even ef he was fined fifty dollars fur doctorin' Mr. Beckwith, he could charge a heap over that fur his pestiferous medical attendance. But I reckon the fine would cut his career short—right off by ther ears, so ter say."

"How in the world did you learn so much of law?" inquired Eudora.

"Picked it up on the fly. As fur Chippy, however, I don't think we'll apply the law ter him; I've got another scheme in my mind which I reckon will lay him 'way out. He's a first-class scamp, arnd I mean ter prove it. That is what will lay him out. Meanwhile, don't you worry erbout Mr. Beckwith; things are workin' jest erbout ez they should, arnd he'll admit hisself a wal marn afore many days. You see!"

At this moment footsteps sounded on the stairs and B. Franklin Betts reappeared. His black face seemed to have grown several shades lighter, and his big, white eyes were certainly several sizes larger than usual. He looked like a badly-scared man, and Eudora's heart began to palpitate with the conviction that he brought very bad news.

"What is it?" she gasped.

"Oh! oh!" groaned Betts, sinking into a chair.

"What is it, I say?" she repeated.

Franklin pointed one trembling hand upward.

"It's him!" he lamented.

"My father? What of him? Is he ill?"

"No, no; he's well—he's awful well, an' dat's w'ot is de matter. Oh! I wish dis niggah had nebber left old Car'liny!"

"B. Franklin Africanus," said North River Nat, severely, "ef yer wits ain't all gone dead back on ye, make it manifest. Speak out like a marn, arnd don't set thar a-whimperin' like a sick cat with the cholera."

"Let me know what has happened?" added Eudora.

"He's gone ter bed!" lamented Franklin.

"Rather early, but what on't?"

"He sez he's a-goin' ter commit suicide!"

Eudora and Katie cried out in their alarm, but Nat was of a more methodical turn of mind.

"Has he any p'ison thar?"

"No, but he's had me open both winders."

"What o' that?"

"He sez he'll take cold an' hev the pneumonia," explained Betts, his teeth chattering.

"Not much he won't, when the mercury is jest sizzlin' in the thermometer. But give us p'ints, Bettsy—give us full arnd authentic information."

"Wal, sah, he came back to de room wid an awful scowl on his face, an' he picks up his cane an' he sez, sez he: 'Betts, you scoundrel, I's a good mind ter break dis ober yer back!' Doan ye do it, sah,' sez I, all in a tremor ob mental agitation; 'I's cl'ar suah my back would break afore de cane would, sah.' 'You need yer stupid head broke,' sez he. 'Deed, sah,' sez I, 'I need dat ter keep in my brains, sah.' 'Brains?' sez he, in a voice which made my knees rap ag'in' one aunder awful; 'you ain't got no brains, you murd'rous pirate!'

"He's got ye down fine, Bettsy," put in Nat, gravely.

"I thought he would put me down on de floor, an' smash in my ribs, but he didn't. 'Open dem winders!' sez he, a-p'intin'. 'But, sah, de wind—' 'Open dem winders!' he sez, in a tone ob manner which neah bereft me ob reason; an' I scuddled to dem air winders straight way an' slid 'em boff up."

"Now,' sez he, 'I's goin' fur ter commit suicide.' 'Sah,' sez I, 'ef sech am de case, won't you let me hab an' evenin' off?' 'Silence,' sez he, 'I's goin' ter go ter bed an' lay all night wid dem winders open. I shall contract pneumonia, an' deff will soon foller. Den we'll see ef my vampire companions will be satisfied. I will die, an' den send my ghos' back fer ter haunt dem.'

"He did say all dat, fur suah, Miss Eudora, an' now he's gone ter bed, an' de winders is both open, an' I know dis house will hab crape on de doah afore dis day week. Oh! I wish dis niggah had nebber left Car'liny!"

B. Franklin Betts told this tragic story with much snuffing, and much rocking of his body back and forth, and his big, white eyes looked like those of a frightened animal, as far as expression went.

North River Nat held out his hand to Eudora, whose heart seemed on the point of breaking.

"I congratulate ye," he said.

"You miserable little scamp!" began Katie McKeevin, indignantly, but Nat interrupted her.

"Hol' on, my b'loved comtemporary, hol' on! Don't go fur ter let yer angry passions rise. Let us look at this matter in its troo light. Which is the best, p'ison air or fresh air? Fresh, as-soorely. Is pneumonia common when the thermometer is in the eightys? Assoorely not! Now, even ef both winders be open, Mr. Beckwith's bed stands whar no air kin strike him in shape o' a draught. The result will be he will ter-night hev pure oxygen arnd hogsogen, arnd he will sleep like a top, arnd come out in the mornin' feelin' like a new marn. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

Silence followed this logical presentment of the case. Nat's arguments sounded sensible to Eudora, but it seemed too good to be true.

"Our sick marn is on the high road ter health," he added.

"But he may do some really desperate thing."

"I think not."

"He ought to be watched."

"My advice is, jest let him alone. He's gone ter bed like a sulky child—ef you'll pardon my brashness in sayin' it, miss—arnd ef he ain't petted, he'll keep it up arnd come out all right."

"Do you really think so?"

"Assoorely."

"But that horrible Indian doctor!"

"What o' him?"

"Father persists in retaining him."

"Leave Chippy ter me. I'm jest hankerin' fur a skirmish with the pestiferous critter, arnd you will see me beat him 'way out. This 'ere job is jest erbout rich ernough fur my blood, arnd I kin best any white Injun in New York."

"Do you think he ought to be arrested for practicing medicine without a diploma?"

"Not yet."

"But we may delay too long."

"I reckon not. He ain't goin' ter injure yer parent intentionally, arnd tharby kill the goose—that word fits wal, by ginger—that lays the golden egg. Leave Chippy ter me, arnd you will see him beat, boss, foot arnd infancy, ter use a military phrase."

"I only hope you can do it."

"Patrolman Snyderham will help yez," suggested Katie, with a slight blush.

"Snyderham is a good feller, arnd he wants a corner grocery," said Nat, winking gravely at the girl. "Likewise, I persoom he would keep house over the shop, arnd want a corngenial companion."

Katie beat a hasty retreat.

"Now, Miss Eudora," continued the young detective, "I'd thank ye ter show me Foretop Tom's room."

"For what reason?"

"Clews!"

"I don't understand."

"Thar may be thart there ter show why he went away."

"I hardly think you will find anything, though I do not yet clearly understand, but you shall see the room at once. Follow me!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A RED-MAN ON THE RAMPAGE.

NORTH RIVER NAT had a well-defined purpose in wishing to see Foretop Tom's room, though he hardly expected to see his hopes realized. He believed that the old sailor would not have been on the pier where he met his enemies had he not been decoyed there. It was more than chance that Doctor Chippewa's tools had been at just the right place to assassinate or kidnap him.

Clearly, he had been decoyed there.

Nat was now basing his hopes on the chance that a letter had been sent to Foretop Tom, and that this letter was still in the sailor's room. If it proved to be so it would certainly be unusually good luck, but many a crime had been brought to light by just such means.

The room was soon reached, and Eudora lighted the gas.

"You can look around as much as you please," she said, in her usual kind way.

Foretop Tom had not been a man who had much baggage. In fact beyond a few noticess collected during his last cruise, there was nothing visible in the room which seemed to belong to him, though there was plenty of bric-a-brac which Eudora had arranged there with womanly taste.

Nat glanced at the table and bureau; no signs of a letter in either place.

"Is that a closet?" he asked, indicating a second door.

"Yes. Look inside, if you wish."

Nat did so, but the closet was nearly vacant. One suit of clothing evidently worn on board his ship, and another of ordinary kind, hung upon the hooks. The young detective went through the pockets. He found more or less tobacco everywhere, but not a scrap of paper.

He began to be in doubt, but was not ready to give up. He searched every drawer of the bureau. No sign of a letter did he find there. For a moment he stood in doubt, and then his roving eye became fixed on the mantel.

Walking to that point he began peering behind the bric-a-brac. As he did so he caught sight of a white paper, and drew it out. He unfolded it, and after a moment's survey a look of triumph appeared on his face.

He handed the paper to Eudora.

"How does that impress ye?" he asked.

Eudora saw several lines of writing in a coarse, irregular hand, but she easily read as follows:

"FRIEND TOM:—Am just in from a cruise on the bri' Lady Lize. Dropped anchor in New York for a few days; would like to see you. Old messmates seem scarce—want to stick to those I know. Hear you are in port. Throw your grapping-irons this way. Will be on Pier — Monday eve, at any hour after dark. I expect to see you there, so don't disappoint me. Heave to in that vicinity, and let us talk over old times. Your old messmate,

"SAM TOWNER."

"Wal, how does it strike ye?" Nat asked.

"This seems to be genuine," Eudora answered.

"Ef it didn't it wouldn't be much o' a decoy, but I'll bet a hat it *was* a decoy. Obsarve that it was fur the very night Foretop Tom disappeared."

"Then you really think it a decoy?"

"Yes."

Eudora turned it over thoughtfully in her hands, but did not reply.

"Notice," continued Nat, "the pecooliar significance o' the words, 'any hour after dark.' Suspicious, ain't it? Why did the writer say any time after dark? Simply 'cause Tom couldn't be got away with in broad daylight."

"There is something in that, but who do you think wrote the letter?"

"Hev you a specimen o' Doctor Chippy's writing?"

"No. He never wrote any prescription, for the reason that he furnished all his medicines. But do you think he wrote this?"

"I am so suspicious that I am goin' ter git a specimen o' his writin' arnd compare with this."

"How can you get it?"

"I'll git a certain individooal whom I know ter write ter Chippy arnd describe certain bogus symptoms, arnd ask Chippy ef he kin cure 'em—if so, ter wait his orders ter call. The white Injun will snap at the bait like a hungry fish, arnd write a letter sayin' he kin do the cure fur sure. Thart is how I'll git a specimen o' his spider-tracks."

"A feasible plan, I do believe. When will you attend to it?"

"Right off, quick. Now you take this note, arnd hang to it like a barnacle. Don't let any live soul hev it ontill you git word from me that it's all right. Onless Chippy is more cunnin' than I think he is, that note will be the means o' fixin' him."

"Do you really believe Doctor Holdsworth was the one who spirited Uncle Thomas away?"

"I rely on you ter keep mum, but I don't mind sayin' that I ain't a doubt on't. I've been lookin' round a bit, arnd things is shapin' their-selves in a way which is convincin'. I wouldn't say this ter you ef I didn't think you a right sensible young lady."

"Have you told officer Snyderham?"

"Hev I? Assoorely not! Between you arnd me, that member o' the finest has got a heart big as an ox, arnd a brain as small as a 'skeeter. I don't mean no disrespect ter him, 'cause I reely like him, but he ain't sharp."

"Perhaps you're right."

"I be. Now you won't let on what I've tol', will yer?"

"No."

"Kee-rect! Jes' keep quiet arnd trust ter me, arnd I'll work the case out, arnd show yer parient that Chippy is a first-class scamp. A marn may smile, arnd be a villain still."

After a little more conversation, Nat left the house and went in search of the person whom he proposed to use to trap Holdsworth by means of the decoy letter. This was Erwin Heselton. Of course the latter's real name must not appear, but he could sign an assumed one. If the

Indian doctor answered it his own handwriting might convict him, and there was every reason to believe he would eagerly grasp at the chance to get another patient.

Nat made his way to West Forty-sixth street without delay, and was soon in the presence of Erwin Heselton. That young man had left Bank street at an early hour, and thus foiled the servant girl who had intended to place the stolen articles in his trunk. No one there knew where he had gone, and it was to be hoped that Holdsworth would not be able to get another chance at him.

Nat laid his plan before Heselton, and the latter at once agreed to it. The bogus letter was written, a false name signed to it, and inside of an hour Nat had posted it.

All this had been well done, and the young detective started for home in improved spirits. Heselton had agreed to help him whenever he was called upon, and Nat had a suspicion that this might soon be.

As the boy neared Beckwith's house the impulse came over him to make a slight deviation, and have a look at the Indian doctor's tent.

On a former occasion he had gained important clews by going there secretly; it might be so again.

He cautiously approached the vicinity. The tent was standing in the lot as before, showing its dim white form in the darkness. All was very quiet within and about it, but he could see that a light was burning.

"I need ter be summut car'ful," he soliloquized, as he crept forward. "I dunno whether Chippy is enter me ez a detective yet, or not, but I don't want his big Injuns ter fall me with their tommy-hatchets arnd divorce my skulp from the rest o' my anatomy. Assoorely not! All the hair-tonic in New York couldn't reconcile me ter the loss o' the crop Natur' ginerously pverided me with."

The silence continued. He reached the rear of the tent, and knelt down in the old place. The slit in the canvas was still there, and he was about to take a look when the rattling of a stone caused him to turn his head.

Some one was approaching the tent, but in a zigzag course which indicated that he had been indulging in liquid stimulant too freely for his own good.

Nat smiled. He believed that some drunken fellow was about to descend upon Holdsworth, and that some sport would follow, but a closer view revealed the fact that the reeling man was one of the doctor's own red-men.

The spy hugged the tent and lay very quiet, but the man did not once glance his way. Nat quickly looked inside the tent. Doctor Chippewa and two of the Indians were there, the former being engaged in smoking and, evidently, deep thought.

The third Indian appeared at the entrance. He came to a halt there, and stood as near erect as was possible, but exhibited a painful want of stiffness in his legs.

Holdsworth looked at him, and a frown appeared on his face.

"You fool! you are drunk again!" he exclaimed.

"Whoop!" returned the noble red-man. "Set 'em up ag'in, boys! we won't go home until mornin'. I'm Sun-that-Shines, an' I'm a big Injun from over the Rhine. Yah—whoop!"

"Silence!" commanded Chippewa. "Do you want the police down upon us? Sit down!"

He arose, placed a camp-chair and guided Sun-that-Shines into it. There was little about the noble warrior that was "shining" just then, and he submitted with good grace but poor judgment in the way of helping himself.

"You're at your old tricks again," continued the doctor, angrily. "You are never to be trusted, and once you get sight of whisky, you go and fill up like a mere swine."

"Why shouldn't I git full?" asked Sun-that-Shines, with a gurgle and a hiccup. "I'm only happy when I'm full, an' I reckon I've a right ter git that way. Why not? I'm a big chief with seven toes on my feet, and I wear trade-marked corsets. I'm a bad man when I'm mad, an' a-slayin' epidemic right from Epidemic City. I'm chain lightnin' on a tear, an' a mixture o' grizzly b'ar an' tarantula. Whoop! Hear me sing! Ya-whoop! Ker-whoop!"

By this time Nat had come to the conclusion that the supposed Indian was no more one than himself, and it enlightened him a good deal as to Chippewa's methods.

Probably all the so-called Indians were Western roughs in disguise—counterfeit red-men to give plausibility to his scheme—and partners of his plan for raising money.

Sun-that-Shines emitted the final part of his

discourse in yells which brought Chippewa to his feet.

"Silence, you drunken fool!" he exclaimed. "If you don't hold your tongue I'll make you; all the police within a mile will be down upon us. Hush your noise!"

"Who says that?"

"I do."

"Wal, you ain't my boss; I'll do ez I please. I'm a big Injun with bells on my fingers an' rings on my toes; I'm a big scalper with a scorpion in my vest-pocket; I'm a brindled jaguar with fangs eleven inches long an' ears bigger than a mule's. I'm a good 'un, an' don't ye doubt it. I'm tough, an' I'm a terrer, an' I'll yell when I feel in humor, by thunder! Ya-whoop! Ker-who-o-o-o!"

He ended with a tremendous yell, and Holdsworth sprung forward and caught him by the neck.

"You dog!" the Indian doctor hissed, "we'll see if you will stop!"

He bore the unlucky Sun-that-Shines to the ground and, still holding fast to his throat, knelt upon his breast. It looked very much like a tragedy, and Walking Bear and War-Wolf sprung to their feet.

"Don't kill him, Jake!" exclaimed Walking Bear.

"I'll stop his cursed squalling or—"

Holdsworth did not finish the sentence. Sun-that-Shines had been a good deal soothed by the unexpected assault, and he now proved that he was not wholly helpless. Somehow he managed to draw back one of his legs, and he suddenly planted the foot in the doctor's stomach with a force which sent the latter spinning across the tent.

He fell at the entrance, and partly outside, and as he scrambled to his feet he saw Sun-that-Shines rushing at him with a drawn knife.

He had no weapon at hand, and, quickly coming to the conclusion that it was a case where discretion was wiser than valor, he dodged around the tent with the maddened Sun-that-Shines in close pursuit.

A moment often brings great changes. A little before it had looked as though North River Nat had no interest in this quarrel, but as Holdsworth rushed his way the scene underwent a great transformation.

The boy sprung quickly to his feet. As he did so Holdsworth rushed past him, and Nat was thus left between the two men. Worse than this, it seemed too late to run; Sun-that-Shines was but a few paces away, his knife raised for a fatal blow.

He was too drunk to know what he was doing, and the young detective's life was in the utmost peril.

CHAPTER XIV.

"THE RULER OF THE ROOST."

NEVER before had North River Nat had occasion to use his wits more quickly. His position had placed him in the very danger Doctor Chippewa was thus escaping, and as Sun-that-Shines then seemed strong enough on his legs, it would never do to turn his back to the man.

What was to be done?

Nat had an idea, and he executed it with wonderful celerity. The knife was almost over him; he had no time to lose. He dropped flat to the ground.

Another moment and Sun that-Shines tripped over him, and sprawled widely on the ground.

He was hardly down before Nat was up. With a quick spring the boy regained his feet. Walking Bear and War-Wolf were rounding the side of the tent, but he did not wait to meet them. Promptly he started in retreat, and his feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he beat a retreat from the lot.

He did not pause until he reached the nearest building; then he came to a halt and looked back.

Evidently the excitement was over.

He could see the tent-men in a group, and Sun-that-Shines seemed to be tame enough; in fact, Nat judged from appearances that the fall had in some way injured the bogus red-man.

The boy was very cool after his adventure, but no one knew better than he that he had been in great danger. Had he been less quick-witted, his history would have ended then and there.

Still watching, he saw the fallen "warrior" helped back to his tent by his companions.

"I reckon it's time for me ter slide. Wonder ef they will suspect me? Most likely they will think it was only some common boy stealin' a look at them out o' curiosity. Wal, I don't hanker fur any more o' thart kind o' curiosity ter-night, arnd I reckon I'll slope."

He lost no time in carrying out this plan, and

in a short time he was again at Daniel Beckwith's.

Before he entered he glanced up at the old gentleman's room, and saw that the windows were still open. Beckwith was persisting in his determination to commit suicide by breathing air. The whole house was quiet, however, showing that peace had in a measure been restored.

Eudora was sitting up for Nat, and he gave her what encouragement he could, but did not mention his latest adventure.

An uneventful night passed, and in the morning Nat went down and found Eudora, Katie and B. Franklin Betts together. The latter had knocked at Mr. Beckwith's door, but without getting any reply.

They were now considering whether it would be well to enter unbidden.

This point had not been settled when there was a vicious ring of the door-bell. Katie was busy, so Betts went to answer it. Just as he laid his hand on the knob the bell rung again in a way which made it almost jump out of the hall, and Franklin hastened to pull the door open.

Then he recoiled in consternation.

His master stood outside.

Grimly Mr. Beckwith marched in; viciously he slammed the door to; and then he turned upon Franklin and almost annihilated him with a terrible glare.

"Well," he exclaimed, "why do you stare at me like a half-witted baboon?"

"I be-be-be your pardon, sah, bu-bu-but I thought—"

"What did you think?" shouted Beckwith.

"I th-thought you's in yer room, sah."

Mr. Beckwith suddenly seized Betts by the collar.

"See here," he exclaimed, "it's time for you to explain all this stammering. You never did it before yesterday. Are you ridiculing me?—do you *dare* to ridicule me?"

Poor Mr. Betts felt that his blood was turning to water. All the serenity of his joyous nature had fled, and he was quite sure he was servant to a madman.

"No, sa-sa-sah!" he gasped.

"Then why do you stammer?" thundered Beckwith.

"Cau-cau-cause I's skeered cl'ar out ob my wits!" howled poor Betts, and his head seemed in danger of running all to eyes, so large did his visual organs become.

A quick change passed over Beckwith's face; the truth flashed upon him. This man was actually afraid of him. He had thought that every one was against him, and that he had sunk so low that even his servant ridiculed him. He had resolved to reassert his supremacy: to defeat those whom he thought to be leagued against him.

A look of grim satisfaction appeared on his face.

"You have reason to be," he declared.

Just then Eudora approached.

"Have you been out, father?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"I—have—been—out!" was the slow, but emphatic reply. "I am such a *healthy* man that I thought a ten-mile walk before breakfast would be beneficial."

"I am very glad you were able to go."

"No doubt, Miss Beckwith—no doubt you are *very* glad!"

"I am, indeed."

"Furthermore, Miss Beckwith, I am well enough so that I shall sit at the family table. I shall do this if I expire before the meal is ended. I contracted pneumonia last night and am near the end of my life, but while I do live I am going to be master of my own house. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir, and—"

"I am going to be *master!*" repeated the old gentleman, as though he thought them all deaf.

"My dear father, I shall be very glad—"

"No doubt, no doubt; you look glad! Franklin!"

"Yes, sah."

"You will stand behind my chair at the table and wait upon me. Do you hear?"

"Ye—ye—yes, sah."

"Kate!"

"Yes, sor," faltered Katie McKeevin, alarmed at having that awful gaze turned upon her.

"Is breakfast ready?"

"Not quite, sor, but—"

"Why isn't it ready?" shouted Beckwith.

"Why, sor, I thought—"

"You had no business to think. I don't hire you to think, but to *work*. Why are you idling here? Get back to the kitchen, and if breakfast is not ready inside of fifteen minutes, I will be

there to help you in a way you won't like. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sor."

"Then away with you!"

Katie fled precipitately, and Beckwith then turned his gaze upon Nat.

"Boy!"

"Hyar I be," was Nat's cheerful response.

"What are you here for?"

"Wal, I was sorter hoverin' erround ter see you rule the roost, so ter speak."

"Did I tell you to come here?"

"Didn't hear ye tell me so."

"Then how dared you come? Yes, sir, how dared you come?" shouted Beckwith.

He had frightened all the others into a panic, and he aspired to frighten Nat, but the boy stood there as cool as ever, his hands in his pockets, and his manner wholly unconcerned.

"I don't see nothin' ter be skeered at," he answered.

"How dare you answer me so impudently."

"Wasn't aawer I had said anything impudent."

"I've a good mind to throw you out of the house!" thundered the old gentleman.

"Great ginger! will ye ever make up yer mind w'ot ter do with me?" coolly asked Nat. "First I'm ter go, arnd then I'm ter stay, arnd then I'm ter go ag'in."

"Boy, do you know you are my servant?"

"I'm sartainly in your employ."

"Then why don't you act as the rest of my servants do?"

"That's out o' the question. I don't skeer easy enough ter stutter like B. Franklin Betts, while ez fur actin' like Katherine McKeevin, tain't possible. Thar ain't no marn, nor any other created thing, kin act like a woman. Women is so pestiferously pecooliar that they can't be imitated, nor understood, even by themselves."

There was a pause. Eudora waited with fear and trembling. Into what new frenzy would Nat's fearless, yet quaint and respectful, remarks throw her choleric father? The old gentleman gazed grimly at Nat, his face telling nothing of what was in his mind, while several seconds slipped away.

Suddenly he turned to Betts.

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah," replied the colored man, with a quaver in his voice.

"Go to Kate and bid her put another plate on the table beside of mine. This boy will eat with me. With me, Miss Beckwith, do you hear?"

He had turned to Eudora, as though he bid her oppose him if she dared. She faintly answered in the affirmative.

"I like this strange youth, whatever his name is, and he will remain with me permanently. I think that I shall make my will in his favor, and leave him all my property. If I want to do this, I *shall* do it. Boy, I have only a few days to live, for pneumonia's awful hold is upon me. When I go all will be yours; I cut my relations off with one dollar each. Hang up my hat, and then we will go to the dining-room arm in arm. Take the hat!"

Nat obeyed this injunction, but as he did so, seeing that Mr. Beckwith was looking at Betts, managed to whisper to Eudora:

"Keep cool! Let him be ruler o' the roost, arnd all will end lovely. Assooreedly!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE INDIAN DOCTOR CALLS.

NORTH RIVER NAT went to the dining room arm-in-arm with Mr. Beckwith, as the latter had ordered; he sat beside him at the table; and his ease and appetite did not suffer from being in such august company. He ate heartily, and while he ate, he talked. If he ceased, Beckwith led him on, and though the old gentleman did not smile, it seemed certain that he found pleasure in Nat's quaint conceits.

There was a more pleasing feature of the meal. Mr. Beckwith ceased to speak sternly to Eudora, and his voice actually had a measure of its old kindness when he addressed her.

When breakfast was finished Mr. Beckwith told Betts to accompany him to his room. That person had been doing duty behind his master's chair, according to orders, and in the presence of the whole family had begun to feel safe. This last order put him in a panic again, and he went with fear and trembling.

Nat was engaged in consoling Eudora, and giving her a hopeful view of the case, when the basement bell rung. Katie answered it, and after some delay she reappeared in company with Patrolman Snyderham.

The fat officer's face was aglow with good humor, and he bowed politely to Eudora.

"How you vas, Miss Beckwith. I see mit my eyes dat you vas feeling charming py your looks. Dot vas kind of Providence to make dose young lady so beautiful, don't it? Poy, how you vas, yourself?"

"Do you bring us news, officer?" asked Eudora.

"Dot vos shust what I vas pringing."

"About my missing uncle?"

"Ya."

"Have you found him?"

"Nein, but I have der glue."

"The what? Oh! I see, the clew."

"Ya, I have der glue."

"Stick to it, mister," advised Nat, facetiously.

"Foredop Tom has gone mit himself to der Vest. Dis is how it vas. He haf drouble mit der Indian doctor, und he think he vas von fraud. How vas he to prove it? Why, go Vest to where Holdsworth game from, und git proof he vas a humpug. Und dot is what he has done; he is all right, Foredop Tom is, und he will gomes back all right mit himself. I told you I would soluv this mystery, und I haf done it. I vas von of der finest!"

"How'd ye git proof?" asked Nat, who placed no reliance in this theory.

"I haf not got der proof yet; I have thought it over, und studied it out. Dot vas der way they do it in France, und I believe a Frenchman vas no smarter than an American, don't it?"

"Do you mean thart ye hev merely studied this out as a theory, arnd that you hev no proof?"

"Dot vas it, und I thinks I have done a good job. Miss Beckwith, I shall glaim der reward for finding Foredop Tom, und den resign from der fiest, und Katie und I vill both marry mit ourselves und move into a corner grocery."

Snyderham's face beamed with happiness, but Katie told him to "go along wid yez," while Eudora, seeing that the alleged clew amounted to absolutely nothing, asked if any one knew from what part of the West the Indian doctor had come.

"Nein," Snyderham answered, "but Foredop Tom will find out where."

"Do you know how large the West is?"

"I haf not der stastics, but I thinks it vas apout der size of Staten Island. Haf no fear, my tear Miss Beckwith, Foredop Tom is not der man to pe discouraged easy mit himself, und if der Vest vas as large as Westchester County, or even New Jersey, he vould find out all. Dot man should be von of der finest, py shimmey!"

It was clear that there was nothing whatever in his theory, but he was so innocently pleased with it that neither Eudora nor Nat cared to discourage him. He stayed only a few minutes; then, after a few private words with Katie at the basement door, went off down the street with a placid smile on his face.

In a short time Nat was summoned to Mr. Beckwith's room. That gentleman was sitting in his big chair near the open window, and Nat had never before seen him looking so well. He had nothing in particular to say, but he led Nat on to speak of various subjects, and listened attentively to all.

His manner continued grave and grim, but not once did he refer to himself as an invalid.

Finally the door-bell rung, and Beckwith turned his head quickly toward Betts.

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah."

"That is Doctor Holdsworth. Go and escort him here."

"Yes, sah."

Nat said nothing, but he was wondering how the "white Indian" would be impressed by the new order of things.

Holdsworth was soon ushered in by Betts, but he stopped short as he saw the open windows. Surprise and, Nat thought, consternation showed in his expression.

"My dear Beckwith," he abruptly said, "what does this mean?"

"To what do you refer?" asked the patient, grimly.

"The windows—the air! Why, sir, this is very indiscreet! You will contract a cold!"

"Sir," replied Beckwith, sternly, "I already have the pneumonia!"

"You have?"

"I have, sir."

"Then why in the world are you sitting in the full current of air?" Chippewa demanded.

"Because, sir, I have decided to die. I have found that all my relatives are against me; that they consider me an incumbrance, and are anxious to get rid of me. I am resolved to do all

that I can for them, and I have deliberately exposed myself to this danger. I slept last night with my windows open. The result is that I already have pneumonia, and the end is near!"

This statement was made in a firm voice, and he gazed unwaveringly at the Indian doctor. The latter looked dumfounded, and ill at ease.

"Really, sir, something must be done—"

"To what? For what?"

"To save you from this deadly complaint! You must have the windows closed; go to bed and take a sweat—"

"Thank you, no; I have been perspiring for weeks. I have had enough of it."

North River Nat felt like uttering a cheer, while Doctor Chippewa's face flushed.

"My dear sir, this is alarming," declared Chippewa.

"I know it."

"Allow me to feel your pulse."

"Go on!"

"Fever!—very high fever! Mr. Beckwith, I implore you to retire and take due precautions:

"Pneumonia is not to be baffled, sir."

"There is yet time to save you; I feel sure of it. A month ago you could not have been saved but my medicines have built up your system and your strength greatly. There is yet hope, if you will only obey me."

"I am done with hope; what I want now is pneumonia, and I am going to have it. It is a privilege of the rich to have such luxuries as they desire. I want pneumonia; I have it; and I am going to keep it. 'Twill carry me off inside of a week. I shall retain you as my doctor to the end, and I will take whatever medicine you offer, but I won't go to bed, and I will sit here in the deadly draught from the open windows!"

Doctor Chippewa sat in silence and stared at the speaker. Before he had handled his dupe with ease, but this new freak utterly upset him. How was he to meet it? What could he do to stop the current of events! True, Beckwith had said that he would be retained as physician, but he was astute enough to feel sure that the end of his harvest was near; that he would soon be dismissed.

As soon as he recovered his wits he came to the conclusion that half a loaf was better than none, and as he could not bring Beckwith to his point of view, he once more prepared to humor his dupe's whims.

He asked many questions, and made all the show of medical knowledge that he could, and then said that he would go home and prepare a fresh lot of medicine.

When his mind once more became free from business affairs he found time to look at Nat more closely. He did not like this boy. He did not suspect that Nat was acting the detective, but his face was too intelligent and sharp to please Chippewa.

This being the case he suggested that the boy be sent away from the chamber, and kept away, but Beckwith so curtly replied that Nat would remain that the suggestion was not repeated.

Chippewa made a few of his most oily and bland remarks, and then left the house.

Ten minutes later Nat emerged from the basement door and hastened away with long, quick steps. It seemed that he was going on important business. What did it mean?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SHANTY ON THE ROCKS.

ERWIN HESELTON was seated in his room on Forty-sixth street when North River Nat entered. The boy seemed a good deal out of breath, and there was a trace of excitement on his usually placid face.

Heselton sprung to his feet.

"What is wrong?" he demanded.

"Don't know as nothin' is wrong," Nat answered.

"But you come in haste and—"

"Assoorely. My b'loved comtemporary, jest cast yer eyes over that public dockymunt."

Nat slapped a soiled half-sheet of writing-paper energetically down on the table in front of Heselton.

"Peruse that epistle ter the Chippewas!" he added, a trace of exultation in his voice.

Heselton saw coarse, sprawling writing on the note, and he read the following lines:

"Doc HOLDSWORTH:—

"I would like ter no if I am 2 be left alon here awl the time. Greggs and Parsons don't cum near at awl, and I hev awl the care ov the pris'ner. I can't go out 2 git a Breath ov fresh Air, and it is tellin' on My he'lth. It was the agre'ment thatt I was 2 hev help 2 keep the Man, but neether You, or Greggs, or Parsons, comes near. The sailor chap is

a Reg'lar bengawl tiger, and He keeps me att It awl the time. I can't leave the howse at awl, and I am losing Flesh. I want some Buddy 2 help me keep him so I can git fresh Air. I need it Bad. Either send Greggs or Sime, or Come yourself by 2 Nite.

"From yores respeckful,

"DAVE MOODY."

Just below this was a postscript which stated that the writer did not know as the recipient of the letter knew where to find him, so directions to that end followed.

"What d'y'e think o' that?" Nat asked, as Heselton looked up.

"By Jupiter! it looks like news of Foretop Tom!"

"Assoorely, it does. Obsarve thart the writer refers ter a 'sailor chap.' Who's thart, ef not Tom Beckwith? Arnd notice how he refers ter Greggs arnd Parsons."

"Your suspicions are right."

"Sartain, they be. Doctor Chippy hired Moody, Greggs arnd Parsons ter steal Foretop Tom. It was done, arnd they confined him in Moody's house, but Greggs arnd Sime Parsons hev shirked their share o' the work, arnd Moody is a-kickin'. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things."

"Where did you get this letter?"

"Right from Chippy, by ginger! I was in Mr. Daniel Beckwith's room this mornin' when Chippy called. He laid his big hat down on the table. I seen a slip o' paper projectin' from between the hat proper arnd the sweat-band. Now, ez a rool, I ain't no pestiferous thief, but I'm hevin' a lively skirmish with the Injun doctor, arnd knowin' him ter be a first-class villain, I gobbled that note arnd read it. Would you nat'rally expect me ter give it back ter him, arter I'd once read it? Assoorely not! I froze to it like a pooty gal ter merlasses candy. Jes' so!"

"We will go to the police at once."

"What fur?"

"They must be notified, so they can rescue Foretop Tom."

"Thart ain't my way."

"What is your way?"

"The perlece hev hed due notice o' Tom's disappearance, bu' they ain't got him, hev they? No, sir! Wal, I've gradooally worked this thing out, arnd now I want the credit. You arnd me are enough ter rescoo Foretop Tom—why shouldn't we do it?"

Heselton held out his hand.

"I'm with you, n'y boy!"

"Come on, then."

And they left the house at once. The course was back up town, but circumstances enabled them to make the trip quickly. In a comparatively short time they approached the vicinity of Dave Moody's residence, as indicated in the postscript to his letter.

During the last few years no part of New York had changed more than that which lay to the west of Central Park. Only a few years before scarcely a building was to be seen therewith the exception of the shanties which clustered along the rocks, almost as thick as swallows' nests under the eaves of a country barn. Progress and improvement had come, however; the ring of the hammer had been almost incessant; the shanties had disappeared one by one, and in their place had risen scores of handsome houses of brick and stone.

Some of the shanties still remained, as Heselton saw when they reached the vicinity, and in some places they were numerous. They reared their heads on the top of high rocks, or almost hid them in depressions, but a more woe-begone lot of dwellings was never seen. It was as though they knew that in a few years more the rocks would be drilled and blasted away, the depressions filled, and the shanties forever swept out of sight.

The letter had said that Moody's house was not numbered, but that, once on his block, "anybody" could tell where he lived.

Accordingly they stopped a boy and inquired:

"Dave Moody? Yis, I know where he lives. D'ye see de goat up on de rocks?"

"Assoorely."

"An' de shanty jist beyent it, wid a stove poipe chimblly in wan corner?"

"I do."

"Wal, dat is where Dave lives. Ef ye go dere, look a little out fur de goat, fur he may butt you wan when ye ain't a-lookin'."

The informant walked on, and so did Nat and Heselton. After a little consultation they decided to apply boldly at the shanty door. Its size indicated that there could be but one room, or if there was more, that there would be no more of a division between them than a blanket, or something of that kind. Nobody would

think of putting a wall across such a small building.

Nat had formed a plan by which he hoped to get inside the shanty quietly, and with Heselton at his heels he marched to the door and knocked. It was promptly opened; a shaggy head and brutal face appeared; but the man inside kept the door at an angle which left only a small opening.

"I want ter see Dave Moody," Nat announced.

"I'm him."

"Then I want ter see ye. I've come from Doc Holdsworth," and here Nat lowered his voice, "arnd I've got a letter, ye see."

"Give it ter me."

"Not hyar. Doc told me not ter let any one see me give it ter ye. I'll step in a minute."

"No, ye won't!" Moody quickly replied.

"No?"

"No, sir! I don't 'low nobody in hyar. Ef ye hev a letter, hand it over. What're ye 'feered of?"

Erwin Heselton had taken due notice of Moody's manner, and in his opinion it fully confirmed all suspicions against the man. He determined to delay no longer, and with a sudden movement flung his whole weight against the door. The shock was unexpected and resistless, and it not only dashed the door open but sent Moody spinning several feet backward.

Heselton sprung inside, followed by Nat. The latter immediately uttered a shout; almost the first thing he saw was the honest face of Foretop Tom. The latter was not in good shape to receive him, however; he was bound to an upright post, and a gag was in his mouth.

Nat darted toward him, thinking only of releasing him, but Moody uttered a roar of rage, caught up a club and started toward him. Heselton sprung forward and caught the rough's arm, and a desperate struggle began. Heselton soon found that he was no match for the big ruffian, but he clung to him like a burr, and managed to save himself from injury. He was whirled about like a top.

Suddenly a roar filled the shanty.

"Oh! ye land-shark, I've got a chance at yo at last, hev I?" cried a deep voice.

And then Foretop Tom came down upon Moody like a hurricane. His captivity had not stiffened his joints, and the way he used his arms was astonishing. He took the whole case into his own hands, and showered blow after blow upon his late captor, driving him backward, and finally ended by giving him an upper-cut, which landed him senseless in the corner.

"Sharks an' anchors!" the honest sailor then exclaimed, "I wish it wa'n't ag'in' the rules an' regerlations ter hit a man when he's down. I'd like to hammer ye fifteen minutes longer, jest fur luck!"

"Say, you're Foretop Tom, ain't ye?" asked Nat, eagerly.

"I am, by Neptune!"

"Thought so. Known ye by yer pictur', arnd a dim resemblance ter Dan'l Beckwith."

"Hey! do you know Dan'l?"

"Assoorely!"

"Sharks an' anchors! I'm glad ter hear it. Shake!"

The old sailor "shook" with both his resuers, then turned suddenly around.

"Look hyar, messmates, the quicker we git away from hyar, the better. All Shanty-town is in favor o' that land-shark, an' they'll be on top on us ef we don't up-anchor an' git away under full sail. We'll leave him fur now, fur he's got a good thrashin'. Now, light out!"

It was good advice, and they went accordingly. No more was said until they were well beyond the shanties, and then Tom's tongue began to work again.

"Sharks an' anchors! but I've had a hard time, messmates. Got a letter askin' me ter meet an old friend on a North River pier, an' it proved ter be a contemptible trap. Once on the pier I was set upon by land-sharks, knocked senseless, chucked in a boat an' brought up here-away; an' I've been confined in that miserable hovel ever since. Sharks an' anchors! I've sailed the sea thirty year, an' I never was so mad before as I've been durin' that time."

"Do ye know who kidnapped ye?" Nat asked.

"I do, that. Him that held me thar was named Moody; them who kidnapped me was named Greggs an' Parsons; but the one one who was at the bottom on it all was a diabolical scoundrel named Holdsworth."

"How d'y'e know all this?"

"Heerd 'em talk it over. Besides, Holdsworth an' me had some trouble, an' I know his object."

"Do yer want ter git squar' with him?"
 "Do I? Sharks an' anchors! I do an' I will!"
 "Assooreddy! You're jest my huckleberry,"
 Nat returned, in high glee. "I'm inter this
 case, myself, and I reckon the Injun doctor is
 nigh the end o' his rope. Come on, fellers, arnd
 we'll fix his flint right off, quick!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INDIAN DOCTOR AND HIS NEMESIS.

"SAY! that's Dan'l Beckwith!"
 It was North River Nat's voice. He and his
 companions were passing near the Indian doctor's tent on their way to Mr. Beckwith's, and
 had been looking somewhat suspiciously at a
 cab which was standing on a cross-street. When
 they passed it, Nat made the above exclamation.

The gentleman he had indicated was, indeed,
 Beckwith, and what was more, he was in the
 lot and going directly toward the tent. This he
 soon entered.

Foretop Tom had had an account of his brother's late movements, and was not so much surprised to see him there, but as it became evident that he was seeking the Indian doctor, the old sailor's face flushed.

"I'll put a stop ter this right hyar an' now!" he exclaimed, striding toward the tent.

"Go it, boots!" cried Nat, running to keep up with him.

Through the lot they went, and Nat in his enthusiasm outstripped his companions. He reached the entrance of the tent and gained a view of the interior. The so-called Indians were there, squatted down at one side, while Holdsworth and Daniel Beckwith were at the center. Beckwith, leaning slightly upon his cane, was reaching out his disengaged hand to receive a bottle of medicine which Doctor Chippewa was extending to him.

Suddenly Chippewa's wrist was grasped by a strong young hand, and the indignant face of the boy detective met his gaze.

"Hold on thar, ye white Injun!" cried Nat. "You can't peddle any more pison medicine in New York!"

Holdsworth stood in a species of stupefaction, and then Foretop Tom rushed into the tent.

"Right you be!" he cried. "You're at the end o' yer rope, ye land-shark, an' you an' me have got an account ter settle, by Neptune!"

"Thomas!" exclaimed Mr. Beckwith, joyfully.

"It's me, sure as you live, an' I'm a man-o'-war jest now. Holdsworth, you scoundrel, you did a big thing in shutting me up, didn't ye? Wal, it's my turn now, an' I'll shut you up, with ther perlece fur jailers."

Doctor Chippewa recovered his coolness remarkably.

"My dear man, what do you mean?" he cried. "I don't understand a word you say—"

"Tell thar ter the marines! This hyar boy hez the note writ ye by Dave Moody—"

"Assooreddy," interrupted Nat; "arnd I've been over in Hoboken arnd seen Sime Parsons. Oh! yer jig is up!"

A quick change appeared on the Indian doctor's face. He saw that all was known—he had already discovered the loss of the fatal letter—and one idea only remained in his mind. He must escape!

Quickly he made a rush to pass from the tent. The old sailor sprung in front of him, but was hurled aside as though he had been a child. Chippewa's strength was surprising. He rushed out and ran rapidly across the lot.

"He's makin' fur that cab!" cried Nat. "Head him off!"

There was a rush, but Holdsworth had a good start, and he proved himself a remarkable runner. He reached the cab, gave an order, sprung inside and the vehicle went rattling away. Plainly, it had previously been under engagement to him.

North River Nat was far from being reconciled to see him escape. After all he had undergone he felt that he ought to have the satisfaction of seeing the man in the grasp of law, and he certainly deserved it.

Forgetting all about his allies in the excitement of the moment, he darted in pursuit. Eagerly he looked about for a policeman. None was in sight. Still he ran on, though the cab was gaining and rapidly drawing away from him; at that rate it would soon be lost.

He began to lose his breath, and the cab increased its lead. The prospect was discouraging, but just as he felt that he must give up, another cab came rolling slowly along. Nat threw up his hand and gaspingly bade the driver stop, but the latter thought it a boyish trick and kept on.

Nat drew a dollar-bill from his pocket and waved it desperately. The bait was too much for the cabman; he paused. After that a brief colloquy settled the rest; Nat mounted to the box beside the driver, and the pursuit began.

Holdsworth's vehicle was still to be seen, and the second man whipped up his horses and tried to run him down, but Nat had soon discovered that his driver stood so much in awe of the law against fast driving that he was not likely to cover himself with glory.

Only for that, every'ing would soon have been settled, for the leaders, believing that the pursuers had been distanced, had moderated their pace, though still going fast enough to cause patrolmen by the way, to look at them sharply.

Nat was in a fever of impatience. If Holdsworth eluded them then he might afterward be taken, it was true, but in that case the police would share with the boy detective in the honor of running the man down, and Nat felt that all honor belonged to him.

He believed that his cabman might have ended the pursuit if he cared to, but all that he did was to keep the fugitive in sight. A long ride followed, the course being down Ninth avenue to Fourteenth street, thence down Hudson.

Nat grimly consoled himself with the thought that Manhattan Island ended at the Battery, but they did not go as far as that. The foremost cab finally left Hudson street and moved toward the North River. The boy urged on his cabman, and they rapidly closed the gap.

They reached West street and saw that the fugitives had stopped. Holdsworth leaped out, and, valise in hand, hastened upon a pier with long strides. Nat took in the situation at a glance. A Long Island Sound steamer lay beside the pier, with every indication of speedy departure.

Night was drawing near, and it was about leaving for Boston. Doctor Chippewa's plan became plain; he hoped to leave the city.

The boy pursuer ran after him.

Holdsworth strode up the gang-board just as the deck hands seized the ropes to pull it aboard, and turned around with a relieved expression on his face. The sailors pulled at the ropes. Just then a boyish figure darted forward.

"Stop the boat!" shouted North River Nat. "That Injun doctor is wanted."

And he pointed one finger at Chippewa.

The words checked the deck-hands for a moment, but the next instant they gave another pull. They, at least, would take no notice of the interruption. Nat turned in despair to a stout policeman beside him.

"Say, mister, don't let that pestiferous critter escape!"

"Who are you?" the officer asked.

"I'm Five Points Phil, arnd— Say, they're goin' ter start the boat! Stop 'em!"

"Yes, stop 'em!" roared a deep voice. "Stop 'em, or I go as a passenger!"

Big Foretop Tom shot past Nat and, unheeding the absence of the gang-board, leaped to the deck of the steamer. At the same moment Erwin Heselton grasped the policeman's arm.

"Officer," he cried, "the law wants that long-haired scoundrel."

All these excited speakers could not be disregarded, and preparations for starting the steamer ceased. Another policeman joined the first, and their purpose to investigate was evident.

Holdsworth saw himself cornered; he could retreat no further. To attempt to secrete himself on the steamer would be useless, especially as he had no state-room engaged. He determined to face the danger coolly, and did so.

Unfortunately for him the weight of evidence and outward respectability was against him, and when he had tried a little bluffing without avail, he decided that his best way was to submit quietly, meet the charges, and rely on the possible inability of the accusers to prove that he had any part in Foretop Tom's abduction.

Accordingly, he surrendered with as good grace as possible.

Foretop Tom and Heselton had reached the place by following Nat's cab as his had followed the doctor's, and they were free to confess that the clew would have been utterly lost only for him.

Between the three, Holdsworth had been run down.

An hour later Foretop Tom, Nat and Heselton entered, Daniel Beckwith's house. As none of the three had a key Katie admitted them, and at once informed them that Mr. Beckwith and Eudora were in the parlor and wished to see them.

They entered.

Mr. Beckwith arose and approached with a firm step, though his eyes were strangely moist.

"Brother Thomas," he said, giving the old sailor his hand, "I need hardly say that I am glad to see you safely back. You are very welcome, and in the future I will make myself a more agreeable brother than in the past!"

Then the speaker moved to the next in the line.

"Mr. Heselton, I am glad to see you back at my house. I shall not be a rock in your path any longer—I dare say you and Eudora can settle the rest!"

He released the young man's hand and took that of Nat.

"To this boy," he continued, with a tremor in his voice, "I owe more than I can well express. I have been the victim of delusions which made my own life, and those of all about me, miserable. How I gained the idea that I was such a sick man, and why I persisted in the idea against reputable physicians, I don't know. I can only believe that I was for the time a monomaniac."

"My mind is now clear, and the reaction dates from the time when this boy unintentionally made me angry. Acting in this angry mood I found out that I had nearly all my old strength. Since then I have been thinking, and the exposure of that quack doctor has opened my eyes thoroughly. I am a fairly well man; I know it, and I will prove it. No more close chambers and drugs for me; while I am as well as at present, fresh air is my best medicine."

"My b'y, it was you who opened my eyes so that I could see myself as I was, and it was you who saved Foretop Tom. I owe you much. Tonight, my warmest thanks are yours; later, I will give you a sum of money large enough to last you many a day."

The old gentleman's voice was trembling, and he paused.

"I ain't greatly in need o' hard cash, my frien'," the young detective replied, "fur I hev a lib'ral guardien in one Solomon Richn ore, whom I once give a lift when pestiferous critters had him down. Fax is fax, arnd they're stubborn things. Your friendship I shall be right glad ter hev, though. By the way, I drop the name o' North River Nat arter ter-night, arnd resoom that by which I'm ginerally knowed—Five Points Phil. It sorter fits me better, fur I growed up 'round Paradise Park, arnd hev a deep arnd abiding affection fur the lively old Sixth Ward. Assooreddy!"

"All this we will speak of later," answered Mr. Beckwith. "Eudora, my dear, will you ring the bell?"

She did so, and B. Franklin Betts appeared, his face wreathed in the old tranquil expression.

"Franklin!"

"Yes, sah."

"Please tell Katie to serve dinner at once."

"Yes, sah."

And Mr. Betts bowed and withdrew.

The grasp of the law fell upon the whole clique of plotters, and Holdsworth, Greggs, Parsons and Moody were found to be old offenders. They were tried, convicted, and sent to Sing Sing in a short time. It was proved that the Indian doctor's "medicines" were worthless roots and herbs gathered within fifty miles of New York City.

Sun-that-Shines, Walking Bear and War-Wolf were found to be white cowboys Holdsworth had brought with him from the West to carry out his scheme. As there were no charges against them, they were allowed to return.

Mr. Beckwith is again wholly himself, and no one could be more reasonable or kind. Foretop Tom has given up the sea, and the brothers seem to be renewing their youth.

Eudora is now Mrs. Erwin Heselton, and they make a happy couple.

B. Franklin Betts remains in the household, and is more frisky than ever, but Katie has gone. Officer Snyderham, convinced that he is not a great detective, has resigned from the police force, and, aided by money advanced him by Mr. Beckwith, is doing a fine business in the coveted "corner grocery." Mrs. Snyderham, who makes him a devoted wife, was, it need hardly be said, once Katie McKeever.

Five Points Phil is nearing the day when he will have other matters to attend to than detective work. When his education is complete he will have a good business situation.

In the mean while, he often calls on the Beckwiths, and when they speak of his skirmish with the Indian doctor, they still call him North River Nat.

THE END.

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- 530 **The Buckskin Bowers**.
- 535 **The Buckskin Rovers**.
- 540 **Captain Ku-Klux**, the Marauder of the Rio.
- 545 **Lieutenant Leo**, the Son of Lafitte.
- 550 **Lafitte's Legacy**; or, The Avenging Son.
- 555 **The Creole Corsair**.
- 560 **Pawnee Bill**, the Prairie Shadower.
- 565 **Kent Kingdom**, the Card King.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

- 118 **Will Somers**, the Boy Detective.
- 122 **Phil Hardy**, the Boss Boy.
- 126 **Pleayung Pete**; or, Nicodemus, the Dog Detective.
- 130 **Detective Dick**; or, The Hero in Rags.
- 142 **Handsome Harry**, the Bootblack Detective.
- 147 **Will Wildfire**, the Thoroughbred.
- 152 **Black Bess**, Will Wildfire's Racer.
- 157 **Mike Merry**, the Harbor Police Boy.
- 162 **Will Wildfire in the Woods**.
- 165 **Billy Baggage**, the Railroad Boy.
- 170 **A Trump Card**; or, Will Wildfire Wins and Loses.
- 174 **Bob Rockett**; or, Mysteries of New York.
- 179 **Bob Rockett**, the Bank Runner.
- 183 **The Hidden Hand**; or, Will Wildfire's Revenge.
- 187 **Fred Halyard**, the Life Boat Boy; or, The Smugglers.
- 189 **Bob Rockett**; or, Driven to the Wall.
- 196 **Shadowed**; or, Bob Rockett's Fight for Life.
- 206 **Dark Paul**, the Tiger King.
- 212 **Dashing Dave**, the Dandy Detective.
- 220 **Tom Tanner**; or, The Black Sheep of the Flock.
- 225 **Sam Charcoal**, the Premium Darky.
- 235 **Shadow Sam**, the Messenger Boy.
- 242 **The Two "Bloods"**; or, Shenandoah Bill and His Gang.
- 252 **Dick Dashaway**; or, A Dakota Boy in Chicago.
- 262 **The Young Sharps**; or, Rollicking Mike's Hot Trail.
- 274 **Jolly Jim**, the Detective Apprentice.
- 289 **Jolly Jim's Job**; or, The Young Detective.
- 298 **The Water-Hound**; or, The Young Thoroughbred.
- 305 **Dashaway, of Dakota**; or, A Western Lad in the Quaker City.
- 324 **Ralph Ready**, the Hotel Boy Detective.
- 341 **Tony Thorne**, the Vagabond Detective.
- 353 **The Reporter-Detective**; or, Fred Flyer's Blizzard.
- 367 **Wide-Awake Joe**; or, A Boy of the Times.
- 379 **Larry, the Leveler**; or, The Bloods of the Boulevard.
- 403 **Firefly Jack**, the River-Rat Detective.
- 423 **The Lost Finger**; or, The Entrapped Cashier.
- 428 **Fred Flyer**, the Reporter Detective.
- 432 **Invincible Logan**, the Pinkerton Ferret.
- 456 **Billy Brick**, the Jolly Vagabond.
- 466 **Wide-Awake Jerry**, Detective; or, Entombed Alive.
- 479 **Detective Dodge**; or, The Mystery of Frank Hearty.
- 501 **Boots, the Boy Fireman**; or, Too Sharp for the Sharper.
- 566 **The Secret Service Boy Detective**.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

- 2 **Yellowstone Jack**; or, The Trapper.
- 48 **Black John**, the Road-Agent; or, The Outlaw's Retreat.
- 65 **Hurricane Bill**; or, Mustang Sam and His Pard.
- 119 **Mustang Sam**; or, The King of the Plains.
- 136 **Night-Hawk Kit**; or, The Daughter of the Ranch.
- 144 **Dainty Lance**, the Boy Sport.
- 151 **Panther Paul**; or, Dainty Lance to the Rescue.
- 160 **The Black Giant**; or, Dainty Lance in Jeopardy.
- 168 **Deadly Dash**; or, Fighting Fire with Fire.
- 184 **The Boy Trailers**; or, Dainty Lance on the War-Path.
- 203 **The Boy Pards**; or, Dainty Lance Unmasked.
- 211 **Crooked Cale**, the Caliban of Celestial City.
- 310 **The Barranca Wolf**; or, The Beautiful Decoy.
- 319 **The Black Rider**; or, The Horse-Thieves' League.
- 325 **Old Double Fist**; or, The Strange Guide.
- 355 **The King of the Woods**; or, Daniel Boone's Last Trail.
- 449 **Kit Fox**, the Border Boy Detective.

BY OLL COOMES.

- 5 **Vagabond Joe**, the Young Wandering Jew.
- 13 **The Dumb Spy**.
- 27 **Antelope Abe**, the Boy Guide.
- 31 **Keen-Knife**, the Prince of the Prairies.
- 41 **Lasso Jack**, the Young Mustanger.
- 58 **The Border King**; or, The Secret F-e.
- 71 **Delaware Dick**, the Young Ranger.
- 74 **Hawk-eye Harry** the Young Trapper.
- 83 **Rollo, the Boy Ranger**.
- 134 **Surf Shot Seth**, the Boy Rifleman.
- 148 **Sear-Face Saul**, the Silent Hunter.
- 146 **Silver Star**, the Boy Knight.
- 153 **Eagle Kit**, the Boy Demon.
- 163 **Little Texas**, the Young Mustanger.
- 178 **Old Solitary**, the Hermit Trapper.
- 182 **Little Hurricane**, the Boy Captain.
- 202 **Prospect Pete**; or, The Young Outlaw Hunters.
- 208 **The Boy Hercules**; or, The Prairie Tramps.
- 218 **Tiger Tom**, the Texas Terror.
- 224 **Dashing Dick**; or, Trapper Tom's Castle.
- 228 **Little Wildfire**, the Young Prairie Nomad.
- 238 **The Parson Detective**; or, The Little Ranger.
- 243 **The Disguised Guide**; or, Wild Raven, the Ranger.
- 260 **Dare-Devil Dan**, the Young Prairie Ranger.
- 272 **Minkskin Mike**, the Boy Sharp-shooter.
- 290 **Little Foxfire**, the Boy Spy.
- 300 **The Sky Demon**; or, Rainbolt, the Ranger.
- 384 **Whip-King Joe**, the Boy Ranchero.
- 409 **Hercules**; or, Dick, the Boy Ranger.
- 417 **Webfoot Mose**, the Tramp Detective.
- 422 **Baby Sam**, the Boy Giant of the Yellowstone.
- 444 **Little Buckskin**, the Young Prairie Centaur.
- 457 **Wingedfoot Fred**; or, Old Polar Saul.
- 463 **Tamarac Tom**, the Big Trapper Boy.
- 478 **Old Tom Rattler**, the Red River Rattler.
- 482 **Stonewall Bob**, the Boy Trojan.
- 562 **Blundering Basil**, the Hermit Boy Trapper.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

- 28 **Nick o' the Night**; or, The Boy Spy of '76.
- 37 **The Hidden Lodge**; or, The Little Hunter.
- 47 **Nightingale Nat**; or, The Forest Captains.
- 64 **Dandy Jack**; or, The Outlaws of the Oregon Trail.
- 82 **Kit Harefoot**, the Wood-Hawk.
- 94 **Midnight Jack**; or, The Boy Trapper.
- 106 **Old Frosty**, the Guide; or, The White Queen.
- 123 **Klown Charley**, the White Mustanger.
- 139 **Judge Lynch, Jr.**; or, The Boy Vigilante.
- 155 **Gold Trigger**, the Sport; or, The Girl Avenger.
- 169 **Tornado Tom**; or, Injin Jack From Red Core.
- 188 **Ned Temple**, the Border Boy.
- 198 **Arkansaw**; or, The Queen of Fate's Revenge.
- 207 **Navajo Nick**, the Boy Gold Hunter.
- 215 **Captain Bullet**; or, Little Topknob's Crusade.
- 231 **Plucky Phil**; or, Rosa, the Red Jezebel.
- 241 **Bill Bravo**; or, The Roughs of the Rockies.
- 255 **Captain Apolis**, the King Pin of Bowie.
- 267 **The Buckskin Detective**.
- 279 **Old Winch**; or, The Buckskin Desperadoes.
- 294 **Dynamite Dan**; or, The Bowie Blade of Cochitopa.
- 302 **The Mountain Detective**; or, The Trigger Bar Buly.
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